Men Of The Way

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MEN OF THE WAY

THE ORDAINING OF THE TWELVE.
St. Mark iii. 14.

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"And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him and that he might send them forth to preach."

MEN OF THE WAY

Stories of The Master and His Friends

BY
LOUIS TUCKER

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To

SUSAN WALLER TUCKER

MY WIFE

AT WHOSE INSISTENCE THE STORIES

WERE WRITTEN

THIS VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY

DEDICATED

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CHAPTER I

THE HYMNS OF MARY

ND did you sing to him, Lady, when he was a little boy?"

"Yes, child; every mother sings to her little son. Why ask idle questions?"

"I do not ask them idly, dear Mother of my Lord."

"How so?"

"Two myriads of people, and more, now hang, in love and longing, on every memory of him. The number grows."

"He said he came for many."

"Since Stephen died for him, more have done likewise. He said something of blessing, once, for those who do not know him, and yet love him."

"True. But what has this to do with songs for a baby?"

"I would put the songs you sang to him, when he was a little, little boy, on the lips of every mother who believes, and in the ears of every child. Paul of Tarsus sent me, who am his secretary and physician, here to Jerusalem, to learn of all he did and said, and write it down for those who did not know him. I came to John, your son, because all we Men of The Way know what he said to you when John became your son; and John brought me to you. Therefore I ask these things, not idly."

"Young man — Luke — your words bring memories that are like sharp swords. The young cannot understand how they sometimes hurt those who are older and have suffered. An old man once told me so when I, too, was young, and held my baby on one arm. Yet, it is a loving thought that the little children who believe on him should have for lullaby the very songs he loved when he was little. Therefore I put aside my sorrow, and speak. You said that you would write them?"

"Here is papyrus, inkhorn, and pen. Say on."

"When he was very small, he loved best the song the angels sang that white night in Bethlehem. The shepherds told me, and I sang it to him. Perhaps you have heard it, for the bit the shepherds remembered was so short that many learned it."

"I have heard, but I would hear again."

"I sang it to him often, when he was so small that he could not name me, but only smile. It runs: 'Glory be to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men.' It is so very short that that is all. There was more to it, much more, the shepherds said, and I have heard it in my dreams, but that is all that they remembered. Have you written it down?"

"Yea, Lady."

"Nay, he called me Woman — Madame — when he did not say Mother. Do you the same."

"Madame, the children born of those who trust in him, shall hear this lullaby to the world's end, and beyond. Say on."

"Then, too, he greatly loved the song made of the things which came to me after God told me, by his angel Gabriel, of the coming of my son; which things I told to my cousin Elisabeth. It was not a song at first; but as I held him to my heart, and told him over and over

the same thing, the words fell into melody at last, and made a singing. Is your pen ready?"

"Ready, Madame. Say on."

"'My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.'

"Elisabeth was standing just inside the doorway and we kissed each other.

"'For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden;
For, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.'

"Zacharias was standing by her. It was evening, and the yellow sunbeams fell through the doorway on his great white beard.

"'For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.
And his mercy is on them that fear him, from generation to generation.'"

"'From generation to generation.' Madame, I never heard the air to which you croon it."

"There was a music around Gabriel, when he left me. My little son loved and learned that air, but, from the first, he always knew the angels' glory-song. Shall I go on?"

"'He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and hath exalted the humble and meek;
He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.'

"We were very poor then. It was before the Magi brought the gold and spices. Are you ready for me to go on?"

"'He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy;
As he promised to our forefathers, to Abraham, and to his seed forever.'"

"'And his seed forever.' It is written, Madame. Would there were some way to write the haunting music.

Some Greeks are said to have the art, but none here know it. Your voice is strong, Madame."

"I am not old, child, though my hair is like snow. It whitened when he died. Also, I am going home soon, now, and it strengthens me."

"Going — to Galilee? I do not understand."

"Going home; where he is."

"Oh, Madame, say not so; we could not bear —"

"Hush, you could bear much more than that — and shall have need to. Would you hear the song that Zacharias made in his dumbness, and sang when his tongue was loosed? My son, when he was little, loved that too. It begins:

"'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people.'

"Zacharias, as well as I, had seen Gabriel, — had seen him with open eyes, — as I had; not in a vision, as Joseph did. Are you ready to write again?" The song goes on:

"'And hath raised up a mighty salvation for us in the house of his servant David;

As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began:

That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us.'

"I was the daughter of the house of David, you know. I had no trouble in remembering his words, for he sang it many times. I asked him to. He, also, had heard a music, when the angel was going.

"'To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant;

The oath which he sware to our father Abraham.'

"You know that Gabriel stands in the presence of God, and sings God's praises, not unacceptably. He told me so. I think it was because we both saw him,

who is thus the greatest of all created poets, that our hearts leaped forth into these songs. Shall I go on?

"'That he would grant unto us that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, should serve him without fear,
In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.'

"That was about him and me. We both knew what it was to be afraid. He had a voice, deep, like a great harp, and he turned to his little son John and went on:

"'And thou, Child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest:
For thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;
To give knowledge of salvation unto his people,
By the remission of their sins.'

"Shall I repeat, or can you remember, and write it down? John always went before my boy, even to death. You know how Herod killed him a year before — before —The song goes on:

"'Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the Dayspring from on high hath visited us,
To give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death;
To guide our feet into the way of peace.'"

"It is very solemn, Madame, and very sweet."

"It is the longest of his lullabies. There is one other, that he loved much. Simeon made it. The prophet, Simeon, the old, old man, who met us in the Temple, at my Churching. It runs:

"'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word;
For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,'

"Poor Simeon; he was a prophet, a true prophet of the Most High, and he had lived all his life in a nation which would not recognize him, and which said that the last prophet was Malachi. Think what that must

mean — to be a true prophet who can get no hearing. He was wearying for home — as I am. He ended:

"'Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;'

"They were the same people, who would never set their faces towards him.

"'To be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.'"

"'Of thy people Israel.' It is written, Madame. Were there more?"

"There were, of course, the lullabies, which every mother in Israel sings to her baby boy, and there were a few more, made only for him. Some other time I may tell you. But he loved these four best. Leave me, now. I wish to sit quiet, and remember."

"Madame, I thank you, in the name of myriads unborn. Not many years shall pass before every babe, who believes on him, shall drop to sleep to his lullabies. Peace be with you!"

"And with you, be peace."

THE FLIGHT IN EGYPT. St. Matthew ii. 14.

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"He took the young child and his mother by night and departed into Egypt."

CHAPTER II

THE DESERT. A CHRISTMAS MASK

DRAMATIS PERSONAE:

YUSSUF. Mature, bearded, carries staff. Wears robe, girdle, and sandals. Long hair.

MIRIAM. Young. Wears robe, sandals, girdle, and veil.

THE BABE. Boy about two years old, dressed like the Egyptian.

THE EGYPTIAN. Young man, short hair. Dark. Wears sleeveless shirt, ending just above knee, and sandals.

CENTURION. Clean shaven. Short hair. Armor of Roman.

ORDERLY. Same dress. Some difference in armor.

BABES OF BETHLEHEM. A number of children two years old and under. Variously but scantily dressed in white.

ANGEL. A young man robed in white, clean shaven, with a square chin and masculine face.

PROPERTIES

A donkey. A very small Bedouin tent. A dark rug or blanket. A leather water-bottle.

SCENE ONE

A HOLLOW BETWEEN TWO SANDHILLS ON THE DESERT
VERY BRIGHT SUNLIGHT

(Enter YUSSUF, *leading the donkey with* MIRIAM *mounted cross-saddle. She carries* THE CHILD, *asleep, his face covered with the end of her veil. He wakes.)*

MIRIAM. Yussuf, he wakes.

YUSSUF. Miriam, are you tired?

MIRIAM. Yes. So is He, and you, and so is the donkey.

YUSSUF. We have marched far. It is full time to rest.

(He helps MIRIAM *and* THE BABY *down, unrolls the blanket and tent, spreads the blanket, pitches the tent, and puts them under it. During this interval* BABES OF BETHLEHEM, *invisible to* YUSSUF *and* MIRIAM, *troop on the stage, play with* THE BABY, *and pretend to help* YUSSUF.*)*

YUSSUF. Now camp is made I go to watch the road.
Rest gently, Miriam.

(He goes to rear of stage and looks carefully over one of the sandhills. The BABES OF BETHLEHEM *frolic, then nestle down in the sand.* MIRIAM, *under the tent, takes little* YESHUA *in her arms and sings to Him.)*

MIRIAM. *(Sings. Air: any simple lullaby.)*
Abraham of old, nearby Bethlehem,
Built a tower of stones, roughly hewing them.
David played therein, then grew king, and there
Built in Bethlehem a great castle fair.
Tower and castle old were in ruins laid:
Of the castle vault was a stable made
And the tower served for a fold to keep
Shepherds and a flock of the Temple sheep.
Abraham's gray tower, David's town, God's sheep,
On a starry night once lay fast asleep.
When an angel sent with a message found
Shepherds wide awake, lying on the ground.
So he told it there, standing over them;
They, when he was gone, went to Bethlehem,
To the stable vault David built where they,
Fast asleep and warm, found a Baby lay.
Just a Baby small in a stable born.
Though the angel hosts heralded that morn,
Though the saints of old prayed to see His birth,

Though this little Child shall change all the earth,
In a stable old, without anything
But a poor man's love, there they found the King.

YUSSUF. Miriam, I can see the road from here.
There is a man upon it badly hurt.
He reels and staggers.

MIRIAM. Yussuf, call him here.

(YUSSUF calls and signs. Little YESHUA and the BABES OF BETHLEHEM *wake up, then drop to sleep again. Enter the* EGYPTIAN, *reeling.* MIRIAM *lays little* YESHUA *down and rises. He plays with the* BABES.)

YUSSUF. What is it, friend?

EGYPTIAN. A cavalry patrol.
A Roman cohort met me on the road.
The last man struck me.

YUSSUF. Miriam, come here.
The back of this man's head is all one wound.

(MIRIAM *brings the water-bottle, and they wash and bandage the* EGYPTIAN'S *head and give him water, which he drinks greedily.*)

EGYPTIAN. Why, friends, are there so many babies here?

MIRIAM. There are no babies here save Yeshua,
Our little one, asleep under the tent.
The blow has dazed you.

(They lay the EGYPTIAN *down on the blanket under the shadow of the tent. All sleep. The light slowly dies into sunset. The* BABES OF BETHLEHEM *wake and slip off stage. The last one rouses* YUSSUF. *He rises, and strikes the tent, and they repack the donkey.* MIRIAM *wishes the* EGYPTIAN *to ride, but* YUSSUF *helps him walk instead. All plod away over sand.)*

SCENE TWO

THE DESERT BY MOONLIGHT

(The party enters, very tired. They halt.)

YUSSUF. Miriam, courage; and you also, friend.
The desert's almost past. That sandhill here
Hides the green fields of Goshen.

MIRIAM. Then why halt?

YUSSUF. Do you not hear the clink of armor there?
A Roman cavalry patrol comes up.
Unless we halt they will be sure we fear them.

MIRIAM. But we do fear them, Yussuf.

YUSSUF. Therefore then
We must not show it. Do we fear them, though?
We know that God will guard our Yeshua.

OFFICER. *(Behind the scenes.)* Halt, dismount. Stand at ease.
Marcus, restrap my loose saddle-girth.

(Enter Roman cavalry OFFICER *on foot, followed by* ORDERLY. *The* EGYPTIAN, *who has seemed on the point of collapse, suddenly revives and steps forward.)*

OFFICER. Whence came you?

EGYPTIAN. From Idumea.

OFFICER. Whither bound?

EGYPTIAN. To the land of Goshen.

OFFICER. Why is your head bandaged?

EGYPTIAN. I straggled and fought with stragglers of a patrol.

OFFICER. Any complaint?

EGYPTIAN. No; it was my own fault.

OFFICER. Herod the King has sent out an alarm to all troops to arrest a man, a woman, and a baby, Hebrews. Did the courier say why he wants them, Kreon?

ORDERLY. *(Advancing and saluting.)* To kill, Centurion. The courier told the men that

Herod has killed all the babes in Bethlehem, trying to find them.

OFFICER. Will Augustus Caesar, may his name be adored, never put down these butchering petty kings? Herod seeks man, woman, and child, Hebrews. Here are two men, woman, and child, Egyptian by speech. They therefore cannot be the same. Proceed. You are dismissed. Decurions, see that there is no straggling from this patrol.

(OFFICER *and* ORDERLY *leave stage, and the speech is finished from behind scenes.)*

Cohort, attention! Mount! Forward, march!

(YUSSUF *and* MIRIAM *stand watching until the sound of the horses has died away in the distance; then* MIRIAM *begins to cry.)*

MIRIAM. Oh, Yussuf, the poor children, the poor children!

(During the pause, while the cavalry were leaving, the BABES OF BETHLEHEM *have trooped in. They now cluster around* MIRIAM, *trying to comfort her, but she neither sees nor hears them.)*

EGYPTIAN. My head, my head! Water!

(He falls. YUSSUF *bends over him.)*

YUSSUF. His strength has given way at last, Miriam.

MIRIAM. He saved us, Yussuf. Say you will not leave him.

YUSSUF. Of course not; but he shortly will leave us.
There has been death in his thin face for hours.
I marveled that he marched so far. He saved us
And therefore we will halt here, Miriam,
And wait by him until he goes.

(YUSSUF *helps* MIRIAM *from the donkey and they busy themselves about the* EGYPTIAN. *In the meantime, little* YESHUA *plays with the* BABES OF BETHLEHEM. YUSSUF *pickets the donkey and lays the* EGYPTIAN *on the blanket.* MIRIAM *takes little* YESHUA *in her arms and sits on the folded tent.* YUSSUF *gathers a few thornbranches and tries with flint and steel to make a fire.* MIRIAM *sings the* Nunc Dimittis *to little* YESHUA, *and the* BABES OF BETHLEHEM *gather round her.)*

MIRIAM. Lord, now lettest Thou thy servant depart
in peace,
According to Thy word.
For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation,
Which Thou hast prepared
Before the face of all people;
To be a light to lighten the Gentiles
And to be the glory of Thy people, Israel.

(MIRIAM *and little* YESHUA *sleep and the* BABES OF BETHLEHEM *make a ring around the* EGYPTIAN.)

EGYPTIAN. I thirst! I die! Water!

YUSSUF. *(Reaching for the water-bottle.)* In a moment.

EGYPTIAN. Why do you travel with so many babies?

YUSSUF. *(Giving him drink.)* Here is water. As for babies, there is only One.

EGYPTIAN. Nay, there are many. Many babies. They stand around me in a merry ring, and clap their hands as when one summons slaves, then hold them out to me. I go to them. Commend me to their little Master when He wakes. *(Dies.)*

YUSSUF. Miriam, the man is dead.
We have no means to bury him. Come, therefore,
Let us go hence.

(He rouses MIRIAM, *places her on the donkey with the*

CHILD *in her arms, and goes, having covered the dead body with the blanket. The* BABES OF BETHLEHEM *escort them to the edge of the stage, then return, sit about the blanket, and wait. An* ANGEL, *being a young man robed in white and without wings, enters and stretches out his hands over the body, then lifts the* EGYPTIAN *up, alive, still leaving a body under the blanket. They move slowly away, the* BABES OF BETHLEHEM *dancing in a ring around them.)*

CHAPTER III

A VILLAGE IN EGYPT

OME here, Cephru, and see the baby."

"What do I care for babies, Amu? Am I a girl that I should gurgle over babies?"

"But this is the jolliest little chap you ever saw, Cephru. He crows and kicks and laughs, and has more fun than any one. Hear him!"

"He is an unusually happy baby. What is his name?"

"His father and mother are Hebrews and do not understand Egyptian, and, as you know, I have no Greek. Question them for me; for it is of good omen that so happy a baby should come to any village."

"Hail, Hebrew, can you speak Greek?"

"A little, sir. What would you?"

"The name of the baby."

"Yeshua, Yeshua Bardawid."

"What do you here, Dawid?"

"Dawid is not my name, sir. We are Galileans, and use two names, our own, and that of some great ancestor. My name is Yussuf Bardawid. We seek a lodging, for some few days, in a pleasant cottage, for we are weary of the desert, and would rest."

"Egyptians do not eat with aliens."

"Nor do Hebrews, sir. We have our own utensils, and seek an empty cottage, not a full one. What is reasonable, we will pay."

"Does Yeshua, the baby, ever cry?"

"Never; that is, almost never. How is it, Miriam?"

"He is the merriest of babies; but one could not truly say that he never cries. Still, it is very seldom, for he is never ill."

"There is a vacant cottage next to mine, Amu, and you are son of our head man, and can arrange its transfer. What say you?"

"Content, follow me."

The quiet man, in the long blue-gray Galilean cloak, lifted the woman from her seat on the grass, to the back of the donkey, and put the child in her arms. Then he put his hand on the donkey's mane, spoke to him, and followed the young Egyptian. The cottage they came to would be called by us a mud hut, hardly fit for a pony; but it was dry, cool, clean, and shady, and the date-palms and fig-trees outside it made a pleasant noise in the wind. When the man had arranged the rent to be paid — he was quiet about it, did not gesticulate, and agreed to the first reasonable price named—the two Egyptian youths left them, and he took Miriam and little Yeshua down, and went, with them, into the house.

We would have called it unfurnished, for there was nothing in it, though the clay floor at one end of its one room, was raised across the whole width of the cabin in a divan six feet wide and eighteen inches high. To Miriam and Yussuf, however, this seemed furniture enough. There was a little lean-to for the donkey at the rear of the cabin, and the neglected garden, though small, had a good many growing plants tangled together within its four mud walls. As a place to rest in, after the scorching tramp across the desert, it was pleasant and sufficient. In a few minutes Cephru and Amu returned with a present of dates, vegetables, and a melon;

then, after playing a bit with the baby, they retired, in accordance with Oriental politeness, that the coming meal might be undisturbed.

The cool sound of the wind overhead, rustling the green leaves, was a pleasant exchange for the scorching silence of the desert, and Miriam laid the little Yeshua on Yussuf's cloak, and set about the dinner very joyfully. She even sang, softly, as she moved to and fro; for, after physical discomfort for some days, they were now at ease, and after very great danger for a somewhat longer time, they were now safe. Miriam was a very happy woman. The baby pulled up by the edge of the divan and made little toddling rushes to and fro, the very embodiment of glee; and Yussuf came gravely in from tethering the donkey, and sat and smiled at both of them.

The dinner was a great success. Yussuf said grace, and they had bread with them, and wine, and boiled lentils, packed in a palmleaf and left over from their last meal; and the dates, and melon, and crisp lettuce, were all of a slightly different flavor from those at home. This, in itself, was luxury to people of their simple habits. When it is added that, though experienced travelers at home, they were enjoying their first taste of travel in a foreign land, and that, though merely a skilled mechanic and his wife, they had money enough with them, in gold, to live, in their frugal but quite comfortable fashion, for a number of years, it will be seen that no boy and girl, out of school on a picnic, could have more of the sheer joy of a holiday then they. They had worked very hard, all their lives. They had just escaped out of frightful danger. They were together in the most fascinating of foreign lands; and they had nothing to do but rest.

"God is very good to us, Yussuf," said Miriam, "and

has given His holy angels charge over us for little Yeshua's sake."

"It is so written in the Word," said Yussuf, looking over his shoulder.

"I wish that we could see them" said Miriam. "I wish that you could see, with the open eye, and not in a vision, the Great Ones whom I saw."

"I was not found worthy," said Yussuf; "yet, in dreams, I have twice seen them and know. There is one outside the window now, and one outside the door, and one here in the cottage, by little Yeshua."

"Why, Yussuf, how do you know?"

"There is no man of the shepherd-king's blood but knows something of posting guards; and where else would you put guards to keep us safest? Besides, though my eyes are not open, they are not quite closed either. As you can tell sunshine through your closed lids, so I can tell that there is a brightness at the door and window which is not all sunshine. As for the Great One in here with us, where would you stay if you were in command of a guard to keep a baby safe? If further proof be needed, look at the baby. His eyes are wide open. See."

Little Yeshua, holding by one chubby hand to the edge of the earthen divan, and standing on unsteady legs, was gurgling like a little leather bottle, and clutching with the other hand, in a glorious game of play, at something in the air, which might have been the sunshine which came in through the window. Yussuf swept one big arm around him and took him to the door. On the way, he beamed and kicked and played with Yussuf's great beard; but once outside, he smiled, and stretched out his arms to something: — say the blue sky. Yussuf looked at Miriam, who nodded, and then brought him back, and left him to his frolic with the sunbeam.

"I like them, Yussuf," said Miriam. "It is good sense, if you have to guard a baby, to make friends with him and amuse him, too."

"They must be very great princes. It is only peasants and great kings who play with little children. Others are too dignified."

"Oh, Yussuf, if you only had your throne; you play with children."

"It was not best, dear. Perhaps he," with a look toward the baby, "perhaps, when I am gone, he will have it. As it is," and he smiled, not sadly, but with a merry twinkle, "I do the best carpenter-work, as a king should, and play with babies; and, just now, like a king, I travel to foreign lands with my suite, and do not have to work. This is a most interesting country, Miriam, and here come ambassadors."

Sure enough, Cephru and Amu returned, and with them came a half-grown girl who proved to be Cephru's sister. They all played with the baby a while; then Cephru's mother, searching for his sister, joined the group. Finally the women and young people took the baby into Cephru's house, next door, and Yussuf was left alone. He thought a moment, then rose, took the tiny Bedouin tent, the wine-skin, and bag of clothes, which constituted the donkey's pack, and carried them outside the house, to the lean-to, where he tucked them into the thatch. Then he brought the remains of the meal outside the door, closed it, and seated himself again in the shadow of the house. He seemed to have no special motive in this. If asked, he would have said that it left no trace of the house having been occupied, and was therefore both neater and safer.

The village lay among groves of date-trees; and half a mile away, outside the trees, and on higher land, just too high for irrigation, the desert began, with the long

caravan road from Memphis to the isthmus, along its edge. On this road, there was constant passing by day and night. As many people traveled by night as by day, thus avoiding the noonday heat. Rome under Augustus took pride in guarding her roads; and the caravan-track was therefore patrolled, night and day, by little squads of cavalry, mostly Greek and Syrian auxiliaries, officered by Romans. These squads moved, at irregular intervals, and turned off the road occasionally, to search the villages, when any fugitive was missing. Yussuf, who, by observation and a few questions, had learned this, looked, therefore, toward the desert much more often than toward the canal, which furnished water for the fields, and led toward the Nile.

The tawny desert was hidden by the little rise in the land, along the edge of which fantastic figures strolled in a slow and straggling succession, that looked as if every group were certainly the last, and yet had continued day and night, unbroken except by wars and storms, for twice a thousand years. The date-palms were planted in mathematically straight rows; and through the long vista of green shadow, formed thereby, could be seen, as through a telescope, the road from desert to village, and the groups that passed its mouth, outside the palms.

Into this vista now turned a resplendent figure. Yussuf, who was still thinking of the Shining Ones of the Most High, was almost startled before he saw that this splendor was of the earth, earthy, and that the man was merely a decurion of auxiliary cavalry, fully armed, and with arms new-burnished. He came down the road at a gallop; and the sunshine, which fell in occasional patches between the palm-trees, winked, and blazed, and spattered on him, so that he was alternately a green shadow and a blaze of gold.

His spear-head made a separate point of light above him. For greater ease in carrying, he had shifted his shield to his left arm, where it blazed like a mirror. He had a great crested helmet, a breastplate, thigh, arm, and shin-pieces, and instead of the usual protection of tinkling bronze plates hanging from the girdle, wore a thing like a chain-mail petticoat, which swathed his middle in a thousand flashes of reflected light, and made no noise. Yet, as he came closer, his arms and saddle-trappings made a pleasant bell-like rattle, and when he reined in before Yussuf, his whole equipment settled into place with a metallic clash.

Yussuf rose and saluted, as he had often seen soldiers do. The decurion dropped his reins and saluted in return, a rare courtesy to a civilian. This was not without cause, however. Yussuf himself, though but in ordinary civilian's dress of sandals, turban, and a girdled robe like a European dressing-gown, was a commanding figure, tall, strong, bearded, self-respecting, and self-possessed, and looked very straight into the eyes of those he dealt with. Then the decurion spoke, in Greek.

"Where are the men of the village?" He had no need to ask for the women and children. They were crowding out of every house to look at him.

"In the field."

"Who are you?"

"A stranger, turned in from the desert to rest."

"Herod the Great," said the decurion, "seeks"—here his horse, which had stood rigid, but vividly alive, began to dance — "Herod seeks a — whoa. Algol, be still — Herod—behave yourself, what has got into you, Algol? — Have you seen — Whoa! Down, down you brute. Would you fall on me? Merhercule!"

The horse, without apparent cause, had reared and

fallen backward, and the man, saving his life by disengaging one foot from the stirrup and swinging to one side, yet failed to spring clear, and plunged down on his helmeted head with a clang like a blacksmith's shop, and a force that should have killed an ox. The horse sprawled on its back a moment, all four hoofs in the air; then it rolled away from the man, scrambled to its feet and stood trembling. Yussuf, in a stride or two, stood over the decurion, slipped a hand into the armpit of his breastplate and felt his heart, then picked him up, and carrying him into the cottage, laid him on the divan. In a moment the cottage was filled with women and children.

"Miriam," said Yussuf, in Aramaic, "I do not wish this man to see you or little Yeshua. Yes, he lives." Then, in Greek, he added; "Cephru, tell all the women and children to go away, and help Miriam keep them away. Unless this man has air and quiet he will die, and the Romans will visit his death upon your village with sword and fire. Let Amu bring water and help me. As son of your head man, he is the proper person in the absence of his father. There is need of haste."

In a few moments the cottage was empty; and Yussuf on one side, and the boy Amu on the other, bent over the decurion and loosened the straps of his armor. A woman silently set a jar of water inside the door and went out again, and they bathed his face. For a time Yussuf was doubtful. He even looked up and shook his head at the doorway, murmuring in Aramaic, "I fear you were too rough with him, friend." At last, however, the decurion sighed, and stirred a little, and, when Yussuf redoubled his efforts, opened his eyes. They were quiet eyes, not angry, and they even had a twinkle in them.

"Here," said Yussuf, holding to his lips a cup of wine; "Drink."

"It was a hard fall," said the decurion, when the wine was gone. "My head still rings and swims." He sat up, gingerly, and began feeling his neck gently. "Who brought me here?"

"I."

"Alone?"

"Alone."

"To lift and carry a full-armed man is work for a trained soldier, or a very strong athlete."

"I have been called strong."

"Justly so. What is your name."

"Yussuf. This boy who has no Greek, is Amu, the son of the village headman."

"Herod, the King, seeks a man, a woman, and a baby, to kill them. It is some palace intrigue. We are ordered to search the villages. There is a rumor, on the road, that he killed all the children in Bethlehem, where they had been, but missed them. Know you aught of them?"

"I, too, am a Jew, as you see; and most Jews have none too great a love for Herod. I trust he does not find them. But Egypt is not in Herod's kingdom. How comes it that his orders are obeyed here?"

"It is a mere courtesy. He asks us to search, just as we should ask him to search Judea for any who escaped from here."

During this conversation the decurion, who was rapidly recovering, had been fumbling in his girdle, under his loosened breastplate. Now his face lighted up and he brought out his purse.

"I see that this is an honest village as well as a kindly one. Having saved my life — for I really think

you saved my life, Hebrew — I could not have blamed you if —"

"Enough. This is a poor return, sir, for such service as you name. All men are not thieves."

"You have not campaigned from Britain to Parthia, or you would doubt that. Still, to do us both justice, I thought rather of the boy than you. Here, son," — and the decurion laid the purse in the boy's hand—"it is but poorly lined, but what there is, is yours. As for you, sir, help me to my horse. You caught my horse, I suppose?"

"He is tethered outside."

"And, if it be any convenience to you that this village remain unsearched, know that I shall report it empty. There are no other strangers here but you and yours, I suppose? Nay, do not start. I heard a child's laugh, and saw a woman's face, before my horse reared. I do not know that they are strangers, but could learn by searching. They did not look like natives."

"They are householders, sir. This is their house. They gave it up for you."

"They do not live in luxury. So be it. I would not bring annoyance on them, and shall report, as I said, the village empty. And now, if you will help me to my horse, you will complete your kindness. My head still tingles, and will, I fear, reel when I rise."

Amu had already gone, with the purse in his hand. The decurion tightened the straps of his armor, gathered up his arms, walked slowly to his horse, patted him, tightened the girths, mounted heavily and rode off, first at a walk, then at a canter. Yussuf called Miriam, thanked Cephru, and went back into the cottage. Miriam came quickly, while little Yeshua, guided by friendly hands, toddled after her.

"Hiriam," said Yussuf, "you said that you wished

to stay quiet a week and rest. We will stay two weeks if you wish, for here we are quite safe."

Little Yeshua, in the doorway, with the blaze of outside sunshine making a glory round him, turned and looked up into the face of some one invisible:

"Tum in," he said, "tum in."

JESUS AND HIS MOTHER AT THE FOUNTAIN

St. Luke ii. 40.

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"Then he would help his mother about the house."

CHAPTER IV

SETTLING AT NAZARETH

USSUF?"

"Yes, Miriam."

"Is it true that you have bought the house, Yussuf?"

"What better use for what was left of the gold and spices of the Magi?"

"Oh, I am so glad, so glad. It will be good for Yeshua."

"A house and garden, a little gold left for use in illness, and my work as carpenter. We should be comfortable, Miriam."

"Was there clear guidance?"

"Clear guidance. It was as if a voice within me spoke. I told who we are, and Bar Barachai, your distant kinsman, offered your own old home for sale or rent. The lease fell in last week and those who held it moved to Capernaum."

"The old house, the dear house, the house where I was born, the house where Gabriel came to me, the house my mother kept, my father owned—oh, Yussuf, it seems too good, too good to be true. How gracious God is!"

"Come, let us look at it. I know you had no heart to go at first, but now it is your own. Here is the key. Come, Yeshua. You have guarded mother well while I was gone."

"Oh, Yussuf, the trees in the garden have grown taller. How beautiful!"

"Little Yeshua shall flourish, here, like them. Tell him about it."

"Nay, open and go in. There is where Gabriel spoke to me, Yussuf. This is the room we mostly lived in. Here mother used to sit and sew, by this dear little window, and look out through the vine-leaves to the garden. Here she taught me to read, when I was a tiny girl; and here I sat and learned the Psalms. She said that every child of David owed it to him to learn by heart his poems to the Lord. Did David ever come here, Yussuf?"

"He visited all Israel. He must have come here. There is no record. It does not matter. He was so great a poet he held the whole Oasis in his heart. He was so great a soldier he gripped it in his mind."

"I love to think he may have stood here, Yussuf, on this very spot."

"Perhaps he did: but, come, let us look through the house. The people who leased it seem to have left a water-jar."

"My mother bought it. I recognize the chipped rim."

"Here is a battered iron cup."

"It was my father's."

"They seem to have been honest folk. They took what was their own and left what was not."

"An old cup and a water-jar, no more; but more precious to me than gold, because of those who used them. Perhaps, since they left these, they failed to find, or, finding, failed to take, another treasure."

"What is it?"

"The Hymn Book of Israel; a copy of David's Psalms."

"Where?"

"The third brick from the bottom of the divan, next the left-hand wall."

"True, it is loose."

"Pull out and reach behind it. Find you nothing?"

"A roll of papyrus."

"Now, God be praised, they left it. Pull it out."

"Here it is; old work, well done and priceless: 'tis, as you say, the Psalms of David."

"Now let me hold it, hold it in my hands, and thank God for it. Yeshua shall learn, now, word and line, the songs that David sang. Oh how good God is!"

"Open and read."

" 'They pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones. They stand gaping and looking upon me. They parted my garments among them and for my vesture they did cast lots.' Oh, Yussuf, it tells of some one crucified. I had forgotten this was here."

"Read on."

" 'I will declare Thy name unto my brethren. In the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee. All the ends of the world shall remember themselves and be turned unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Him.' Oh, Yussuf, do you think it can mean *him?*"

"Some one dies by crucifixion, Miriam, and by his death brings all the world to God. Even if it do mean him it—it is worth it."

"Simeon said a sword should pierce through my own soul also."

"Wait. Hear the next. 'The Lord is my shepherd, therefore can I lack nothing. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me . . . . and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.' "

"Yea, Yussuf, even if it do mean him—'tis worth it."

CHAPTER V

THE SCHOOLMASTER

AND so you have had good pupils, Barjochab?"

"That have I, young sir. Sulyman Baramni, the headman of Nazareth, and Levi Bar Shebhan, the ruler of the synagogue, and the famous Rabbi Phanuel Barannias, now a Sanhedrist at Jerusalem."

"Name you no more?"

"None."

"Strange. I was told that you taught Yeshua Bardawid, whom you of Nazareth called Bar Yussuf; and he grew a rabbi very famous."

"Yes, I taught him letters—and have forgotten it. You know his fate? We schoolmasters try not to remember such."

"As a man he had a most haunting charm of manner. Surely he was not without it as a boy?"

"Perhaps. I have forgotten. He got himself cruci—lifted up. Therefore I have forgotten. Why do you draw a fish on the ground; and why do you question me?"

"Idly, to pass an hour; and yet, not altogether without purpose. I note that you too have drawn, on the ground, a fish."

" 'Hear, oh Israel, the Lord, thy God, is One God.' "

"I too, Daniel Barjochab, believe in God the Father

Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ His only—"

"Hush, hush. Softly. Would you put your life in my hands, young sir?"

"You drew the fish. Besides, my life is in God's hands, not in any man's. Yet I have a work to do; and so, till it is finished, would take care. Therefore if you believe not—"

"Nay, you are a stranger with a Greek name; Lucanus, is it not? and so, I was careful. Yet, you know the words none else in Nazareth know, and I will say them once again before I die. 'His only Son, our Lord, conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary (I knew her well) suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. On the third day he rose from the dead.' Ask now what you will, and I will answer, though it lead to death. I am very old and must die soon, in any case."

"Reverend Father in God—"

"Nay, humble, very humble, and a brother."

"Beloved brother, tell me what you will of him."

"There is naught to tell. I only had him for a little while. He had small need of me. With other children, you tell of sickness, he was never ill; of accidents, he was never hurt; of risks escaped, he was never in danger; of quarrels, he never quarrelled; of disobedience, he never disobeyed. I laid upon him an unjust punishment once, for another's fault—not knowing. He was silent, and the other boy confessed. Who was it? Jude, Judas Lebbaeus, Jude the Hearty, his cousin."

"You remitted punishment of both?"

"Of course; and learned a hard lesson myself, never forgotten. I have been juster, since; and humbler."

"Tell me more."

"How can I, when there is nothing; nothing to tell? You know, already, the story of his one adventure, when he went up to Jerusalem to be made a Son of Precept, and stayed there talking with the great rabbis on the terrace of the Temple. The greatest rabbi of all Israel, Gamaliel the learned, offered to take him into his own house as a most favored pupil; but he refused, and came back with his parents to Nazareth, and to my tuition."

"You say you did not have him long?"

"Not long enough to make a scholar. I taught him Hebrew, we read the law and prophets together, and he memorized, in Hebrew, the great Hallel, and the psalm which stands second in the second score, and some others. He was still learning when he left me and began to help in the carpenter's shop. He borrowed my books for years after."

"Tell me more."

"My son Lucanus, I am an old man, and my words have weight. I tell you, weighing them, that there is naught to tell. All that we tell of children and lads, springs from some defect in morals or in judgment, in health or circumstance. In him, there was no defect. He did no wrong, was never sick, made no errors, was never in danger. He grew, both in mind and body; and, surely, looking into my old heart, you can see that he grew in the love of us of Nazareth."

"Then why did Nazareth cast him out the second time? I can understand the first time, for they wanted many healed, and he said, in the synagogue, that he would heal none; but why, the second time? For he healed some then."

"Yes, he healed me, among others, of a fever. He heard that I was sick, and came at once to see me. Nazareth did not exactly cast him out, that second time.

They just did not believe that he was anything unusual. Really, they were rather proud of him. They felt that if a second-rate citizen of Nazareth could do so well in the world, one of our really first-rate men, like Bar Amni, for instance, could do a great deal better, if he tried. When the Master realized this, he gave them up, and went away."

"The Master? You call him so? Did not he call you 'Master'?"

"Of course; but I came to see, at last, that he taught me more than ever I taught him. I would not refuse a title where it is due.

"Tell me more. What did he do when Joseph died?"

"Nothing; I mean, nothing strange. He did exactly what any lad of sixteen should do; buried him, reverently, and then went to work in the shop, and took care of his mother. It is true that, at the open grave, he stood intently still, stretched his hands towards the bier and lifted his head, as if about to speak; but he dropped his hand again and said nothing. I did not understand, until one told me how he raised dead Lazarus."

"Is there no more? Did this stupendous Light shine in your midst for five and twenty years, and none perceive it?"

"With the mind, none. Young sir, I do perceive that you are young in mind as well as face, or you would know that there is no detail noteworthy, or peculiar, or strange, or memorable, in that which is exactly as it should be. The only noteworthy thing is that it is normal; and that is not a detail. Yet, though no eyes saw that light, some hearts did. He is my Master, and my Lord; yet, I dream of him only as my little lad, who leaned against my knee, with great round eyes of wonder, and read God's book with me.

The High Priest betrayed my little lad to the Romans; and I have never, since, gone up to Passover."

"Did you see him—lifted up?"

"No, I was spared that heartbreak. I did not go up to Passover that year, for sickness of body; and thereafter, for sickness of heart."

"I have heard a story that his mother sent him for water once, and he broke the jar, and brought home the water in his cloak."

"It is an error. He was too sure of foot and hand and eye, and never broke a jar. It rose because he did once take up a little water in a woolen cloak, to show how close the web was woven."

"I have heard he healed a boy named Simon of a viper's bite, by miracle."

"True, yet not by miracle. He sucked the wound."

"I have heard that, as a child, he met the robber, Barabbas, on whose cross he was lifted up."

"False. As a child he met no robbers. As a man, I cannot say. He wrought near a year in Galilee before he chose the Twelve, going to and fro alone; and whom he met, he never told."

"I have heard that he brought to life a dead boy fallen from a roof."

"The boy was stunned, not dead."

"I was told that, as an infant, he struck at his nurse, and she went home and died."

"False. As an infant, he struck at no one. Besides, he had no nurse. His mother reared him."

"There is a story of a playmate whom he cursed, and who fell dead."

"False. He cursed none."

"What of the throne of Herod, which Joseph made too small, and which he enlarged?"

"It was not a throne, but a gate. It was not for

Herod, but for the caravanserai here, which belongs to the government—and thus, for Herod, in a way. It was not too small—and yet, in a sense, it was; for Joseph hung it with one plank off, for convenience in reaching through. He let the lad nail on the last plank."

"How of—?"

"My son, there are a hundred idle tales of him afloat here, all false. That is because the truth had in it nothing strange nor unusual at all."

"Still, one last question, my brother. The words of our belief were chosen since he rose. How came you to know of them, and of the fish? How came you to believe on him?"

"Belief, I think, was always in my heart. I knew, and knew not how I knew, the little lad, entrusted to my teaching, was more than a mere lad. Remember that, from the first, I knew him to be true heir of David, and my rightful prince and king. As for the words and sign, it is most simple. Out of his great goodness, he did me high honor. After he was lifted up, yet before he went to the Father, the Twelve were in Galilee with him, and he sent greeting to me, the old man, his teacher, by Nathaniel—Bartholomew of Cana. When first Bartholmi came to Cana, after Pentecost, he searched me out and gave it. Through him I learned the rest."

"By what name greeted he you?"

"By that of Friend."

"O, thou who art, like Abraham, the Friend of God, bid me depart in peace; for I must travel far, before we meet—near him."

"Peace, O, Lucanus, be with thee."

"And with thee be peace."

CHAPTER VI

PIG

HE village of Branchtown is on the backbone of the ridge between the valley of Rapid River and the great sea. The pack-trail from Caesar's town, the main seaport of the country, to the old, old city of Damascus, crests the ridge there; and even yet, strange figures travel it.

In the old days, when all the world and its merchandise went by pack-trail, it was stranger yet, like a constant parade or a moving museum. Many trudged through the town, without pause, of course; but many, too, halted in the square yard, under the bare sheds of the old stone caravanserai, to cook the noon-meal or sleep for the night.

The small boys of Branchtown were fairly well educated, even as to books, for the village had its schoolmasters, and the Oriental equivalent of what we would now call compulsory education; but as to people, they were more experienced than many a globe-trotter. Though they did not travel to foreign lands, all foreign lands, sooner or later, traveled to them, guided by thin swarthy Arabs, wrapped in bernouses, and leading camels.

The Branchtown boys knew personally, by sight, almost every great dignitary of the eastern end of the Roman Empire. Herod, the Tetrarch, came through

oftenest, for the place was in his district; but practically every governor, procurator, and petty king, in those parts, came up the Damascus road from Caesar's town, sooner or later, and the boys saw them all. Each had his guard, of course; wild tribesmen of the desert, native troops drilled as Romans, or genuine Roman legionaries themselves, the men who had conquered the world.

The boys had opportunity to become skillful and critical in their knowledge of soldiers. As for civilians, the boys knew practically every nation. The most numerous were Jews and Arabs, for Branchtown is in Galilee, and many of the long-distance caravans, from beyond the desert, came through with their Arab camelmen. There were many Greeks, too, for Pompey the Great had given local self-government to ten cities west of Princes' Lake, less than forty miles away, and thousands of Greek colonists had settled there.

The boys all spoke Greek. Branchtown people used Aramaic among themselves, but all the land spoke Greek when talking to strangers, and he was a dull boy who did not pick it up.

There were Persians, too, and Assyrians of Nineveh, and men of Babylon; strange, dark men all, and mostly slow of speech. Frequently there were Egyptians. Occasionally, men from beyond Egypt came through, black men with kinky wool; or men from beyond Persia, brown men; and once or twice yellow men; and often, men from beyond Rome, men with yellow hair and pinky-white skins. The boys soon grew familiar with all the types, and kinds, and races of mankind.

After a boy had grown tired of watching camels and long trains of pack-burros—donkeys—the main attractions were horses, going down to mount the cavalry regiment at Caesar's town, or an occasional Egyptian

or Persian juggler, or Greek minstrel. Almost every boy in Branchtown had heard Homer chanted to a group round a camp fire of camels' dung, in the caravanserai. But the greatest attraction of all, except possibly when wild animals were carried through, in cages, for the Circus at Rome—the greatest attraction of all was Pig. Pig were an abomination in that country. Nobody owned pig. Nobody was allowed to own them. A pig was as foreign as an elephant, and much more dreaded. Yet the Greek colony, less than forty miles away, had plenty of pig, and made a pretty penny selling pork to the Roman regiments garrisoned about the lake. It sometimes got up droves from the coast; which droves had to pass through Branchtown, and had a baleful attraction, a fearful fascination, for small boys.

Once upon a time, there was a boy standing, with other small boys, on the flat clay roof of the low stone caravanserai-sheds. Most things in Branchtown were built of clay or stone, for the country had been settled for two thousand years, and the timber cut off, ages ago. For the same reason, there were ruined stone walls everywhere, and from one of them you could climb to the caravanserai roof. The boys used that roof very much as you or I might use the dress circle at a theater, and looked down to see all the world at its meals. On this particular day they were doubly fascinated, because a squad of Roman soldiers was camped on their way up from Caesar's town, and the Greeks of the colony had made use of their protection to drive up a herd of pig from the coast. The Branchtown boys felt about them very much as you or I would have felt, if we had been allowed to look down on a pack of hyenas.

Our boy, whose name, in his own language, was Yeshua Bardawid, was well grown for his age, and sturdy, and had a pleasant face, and bright eyes that

took in everything. He wore, like all the others, a garment like a dressing gown with a cloth sash or girdle, and he was barefoot. Suddenly, through the caravanserai gate, poked the long bobbing neck of a camel, and the boys began at once to discuss the nationality of the rider. "He is a Persian. Look at his nose," said one. "From Babylon, by the saddle-cloth," said another. "From Elam, at the mouth of the Euphrates, by the water-bottle," said a third, and, at a second look, they all agreed. The boys vastly enjoyed such discussions of foreigners to their faces, because it was carried on in Aramaic, which the stranger never understood. The boys always understood what the strangers said because they always spoke in Greek.

The Elamite hesitated, when he saw that the courtyard was full of pig, looked at the westering sun, to see if he had time to push on to the next village, decided that he had not, and then, spoke to the old man whom the government put there as keeper of the caravanserai. All caravanserais belonged to the Government, and were free; but as they gave only shelter, and all travelers had to furnish their own food and bedding, and buy fuel and fodder, it was not much expense to the Government. There was always a man in charge, who made his living by the sale of fodder and fuel, and by the tips he received from travelers. The old man, who was the keeper of this caravanserai, brought some fodder for the camel, and the pig crowded round him. Drawing a coin from his girdle, the Elamite leaned down to pay him, and out of the breast of his robe, swung a small black leather bag, hung round his neck with a leather thong. He started back at this, trying to conceal it; the string caught on the camel-saddle and broke, and the bag fell among the pig. One of them caught, crunched, and shook it, and from it flew a number of

little white things like grains of corn. The swine crowded to get them. The Elamite, shrieking, leaped from the camel-saddle into the midst of the grunting squealing mass, and snatched the bag in the very swine's snout. There was a quick flash of tusks, a groan, and the Elamite fell among the surging swine.

The Roman soldiers looked on, much interested. It did not occur to any of them to help. The Greeks, the swineherds, leaped forward hand on knife, but it was to keep the Elamite from hurting the pigs, not the pigs from hurting the Elamite. At that time, and in that country, nobody helped or took pity upon anyone else, any more than they do now in most heathen lands. To be sure, Jews helped each other; but the few Jews present could not interfere, or they would have been made ceremonially unclean by the swine—a disaster compared with which the death of a stranger made no difference. In a few minutes the Elamite would have been trampled and bitten to death, if the boy Yeshua Bardawid had not leaned over the parapet and called to the pig.

He used the swineherds' call, such as every Branch-town boy had heard, though few had learned it. The pig stopped, which they would not have done for their own masters, and the Elamite rose. He was weak, faint, and wounded, but his half-empty bag was in his hand. Staggering as he stooped, he made haste to gather up such of the little round white things as he could find between the cobble-stones of the paved court. Attracted by this, the Roman officer rose slowly from his place under the arches of the caravanserai sheds, and strolled down to see what they were. The Elamite had spoken to his camel, which was already kneeling, and he was far too wise, and too familiar with the ways of Roman soldiers, to await the officer's questions.

Hastily scrambling into his saddle, he gave the word, and his camel lurched to his feet and left the courtyard, at full speed from the very first. The officer called to him, but he made no answer, and only hurried away the faster. One of the soldiers came forward, and looked to see what it was that the Elamite had dropped, and the pig had mistaken for grain. He could only find two or three small ones, for the swine had swallowed some, and the Elamite had gathered up most of the rest. He turned them over in the palm of his hand and carried them to his officer, and the two began talking together in Latin. Two of the swineherds were standing very nearly under the boys, and one of them translated into Greek for the benefit of the other. "It is a pity we did not keep him," he said. "The bag, which he dropped before the swine, was full of pearls."

"Is there any way to overtake him?"

"No, the camel was a riding-camel. No horse could catch him."

"It is a pity. We could have used them better than he."

CHAPTER VII

LEATHER BOTTLES

THERE was once a country that knew nothing of tin, regarded glass as jewelry, and had so little timber that casks, and barrels, and tubs, and vats were amazing foreign products, occasionally imported by the very rich, but used by no one. Their coopers could make such things; it was not quite beyond their skill in carpentry; but there was no call for them. As a practical man, when you wanted anything more portable than an earthenware crock, and larger than a goblet, to hold liquid in, you went out and bought a young goat, chopped off his head, just behind his horns, skinned him carefully, sewed up the cuts in the skin, filled it with the liquid you wished to keep, and then ate the goat. This was economical, practical, and direct; and, though the skin sometimes leaked, and the liquid always tasted of leather, it was the universal custom of the country.

Once upon a time, there was a peasant-proprietor who owned an excellent vineyard. This vineyard, one year, gave an extraordinary yield. There was much more wine than usual. About the same time, there came a local scarcity of young goats, due to wild beasts and disease, and acute enough to raise the price of goat-skins. In such a case we would write to some other district and have shipped by freight enough containers of some kind to hold the extra wine. This vineyard

however, was in a pedestrian country. Men sometimes rode horses and camels there, it is true, but other men walked in front of the camels and led them. There were no mails, and so no way to send a letter. There were no railroads, nor even wagon-roads, and no way to transport freight except by mule-back; and the expense of a pack-train was more than the value of most merchandise that the train could carry. Therefore the owner of the vineyard could not send for more skins. There were other vineyards, round about, and they, too, had an unusual yield, and their owners an unusual need for bullock and goat skins. Therefore he could not get more at home.

The boys of Branchtown liked grapes as well as boys do now; and there was no need either to buy or steal them. The kindliest law that ever has been made by any man who once had been a boy, ordained that any passer-by, beside a vineyard, might gather grapes and eat, eat without question or cost, provided that he wasted nothing and carried none away. Therefore the little boys of Branchtown were much abroad when grapes were at their best; and, being well within their rights, and having, therefore, no fear of owner or laborer, they not only touched the edges of the vineyards, but penetrated to the very winepress in the center, and made friends with all who worked there. Probably their help, in part or even wholly, repaid the value of what they ate; for as all small boys do, they helped sometimes. At any rate, they were in touch with all that happened in the vineyard.

The peasant-proprietor, who had quite a surplus of wine and a shortage of wine-skins, made no secret of his position. In fact, he could not. It was discussed by the women who picked the grapes, and by the man who trampled them out in the wine-vat. The small

boys, who frequented the vineyard, knew all about it. There was Philip, who afterwards moved to Bethsaida, and Yeshua Bardawid, and Joses, and Jude, and Simon Barclopas, who were up on a visit from Fishtown-on-the-lake, and James Barzebedee from Jerusalem, and little John, his brother. All the boys were cousins, except Philip; and, of course, there were many other boys in and about Simon's vineyard, though none but Philip was thoroughly intimate with the little group of cousins. There was another cousin, James Barclopas, but he was almost a young man, and did not go much with the boys, being much too dignified to eat grapes and play in vineyards. The parents of all these cousins had taken pains that the boys should get acquainted; for Yeshua Bardawid who, except little John Barzebedee, was the youngest of all, was the head of the elder branch of the ancient royal family, and the rightful king of the whole country. There seemed no visible chance that he would ever regain the throne. It was much more likely that he would live and die a peasant, as had his ancestors for centuries. Still, he was rightfully the crown-prince, and one can never be sure what may turn up, some one might start a revolution, something might happen, and it is always well for relatives to know each other. Therefore the parents of the boys had arranged that they should know each other well.

The boys, like everyone else, discussed how to save the wine; and, like everyone else, could hit upon no practicable plan. In the mean time, as a temporary measure, something had to be done at once. The grapes were dead ripe, and could not wait, but must be pressed, and their juice, when pressed, had to be put into something.

Some vineyards sold their wine in skins, and some decanted it into jars, or smaller skins, brought by the

customers. You had to pay for the skin as well as for the wine, and therefore people who had empty wine-skins usually had them refilled, which left an empty skin on the dealers hands. He, in turn, had it refilled, and so the vineyard's skins in the tower were emptied. Every vineyard, of course, had a central tower; it had to have one in which to store its wine-skins. These towers were built of stone instead of wood, because it was an old, old country, settled three thousand years, and all the timber had been cut off, long centuries before; so that wood for building was expensive, and stone was cheaper.

The owner of this vineyard (his name was Marhar) had, therefore, a tower-full of empty wine-skins. The leather was rather old, and not as elastic as it should be, but he had nothing else. The small boys predicted trouble in large lots, as did the workmen and even Marhar himself; but there really seemed no choice. He therefore put the new wine, as it was taken out of the settling-vats, into the old wine-skins in the tower.

The weather turned warmer than usual, and the wine began to work. New wine, "must," always works and ferments, and rises in beady, heady bubbles, and behaves, generally, as if it were perversely alive. The stone tower in the vineyard was as cool a place as any, and the only place Marhar had. The great bloated skins, looking like drowned bullocks, lay there and grew more bloated still. The maids, who picked the grapes, and the men, who trod them out in the great wine-press, talked freely among themselves. The boys were alert for disaster. Marhar went anxiously to and fro, untying the necks of the old skins to let the gas out, and tying them up again to keep the wine in; for a wine-skin will not stand up, but spills its wine, unless the neck be tied. Finally, the expected happened. Marhar, worn

out, went home to sleep. The man he left in charge was not brisk enough. The wine worked more and more, through a warm night; and finally, an hour after sunrise, a great bullock-hide, containing at least a hogshead of new wine, burst, and spilled it all.

The boys were in the vineyard, with a big slice of bread each, to make their breakfast of bread and grapes. They heard the outcry and hurried to the tower. Just as they reached there, another skin burst, and then another. The whole earthen floor of the squat tower was ankle-deep in wine. The pickers stopped their work; the purple-footed men leaped from the wine-press. The tower-tender ran away. Clouds of flies, and gnats, and bees swarmed to the spilled wine. Marhar himself, hurriedly summoned, came and looked at the disaster, and bewailed his loss, waving his hands and humping his shoulders, as a Jew will. Another wine-skin burst. That wine was as vociferously mourned as if it had been the blood of a slain man. Even the boys, all but little Yeshua Bardawid, joined in; for they liked Marhar. Finally, little Yeshua went up and touched Marhar on the elbow and said, in his pleasant, quiet, boy's voice:

"Never mind, you did the very best you could."

"True," said Marhar, quieting; "I did the best I could. I could do no better. It does not do to put new wine into old skins."

Years upon years later, little Yeshua grew to be a great and famous orator and teacher, Yeshua Natzri, by name, whom we call Jesus of Nazareth. During his lifetime, his doctrines aroused his nation. Since his death, they have overturned the world. One day, when some leading and very able men expostulated with him, for outlining a new organization of his own, instead of putting his ability and energy into the uplifting and

reform of the old organizations, he told the crowd the story of Marhar and his vineyard and ended:

"It does not do to put new wine into old bottles; else the bottles burst, and the wine is wasted."

The story convinced the questioners; and, as a result of his teaching, and of their conviction and co-operation, Christendom exists to-day.

CHAPTER VIII

THE NEEDLE'S EYE

MAN once came to the Needle's Eye of Jericho. He had a woman with him, and a sturdy twelve-year-old boy. They were bound from Jerusalem to Galilee by the Passover route, up the east bank of Jordan and they came late to the Jerusalem gate of Jericho, not from mischance, but because they had left the Jericho gate of Jerusalem quite late.

Judea, in the year 9 A. D., was a native state, like the native protected states on the borders of British India now. The Romans garrisoned its cities and kept residents there; but most internal matters, including the policing of roads, were in the hands of the native government, and very badly done. It was, therefore, dangerous for travelers to stay outside a city wall at night; and the district between Jericho and Jerusalem was especially beset by thieves. Realizing this, the city government of Jericho allowed wayfarers to enter, even after the great gates were closed; but, since opening the great gates of a city is a laborious task, and not to be lightly or casually undertaken, the city fathers very properly required travelers to pass through the Needle's Eye.

Every fortified place, with a great gate large enough to need several men to open it, has a Needle's Eye, as a matter of course. In Europe we call it a "postern;"

but in Europe, Asia, Africa, and every other place where there are fortified cities, the little gate, under whatever name, is exactly the same. In European castles it was often used for sorties; but everywhere it was made and planned for the ingress and exit of mounted messengers at times when the great gate was closed. Everywhere, therefore, it is the same; a small gate just wide enough, and high enough, to lead a saddled horse through. Sometimes it is placed in one valve of the great gate, sometimes by its side; but always it is there. The necessity for sending out mounted messengers at night without opening the great doors is so imperative, that a fortified ancient town without a postern, would have been as grotesque as a modern town without a telegraph office.

The Jerusalem gate of Jericho had, therefore, its postern or Needle's Eye. It had, also, its very human and, therefore, rather surly squad of guards, detailed from the garrison, and thoroughly unwilling to spend time incessantly opening and shutting a door for people who ought to have started early enough, to reach their journey's end before sunset. Therefore they made the people wait outside, and only opened the gate every hour or so, to let the accumulated group come in. It is the regular custom everywhere; and, though inconvenient, is so just that the crowds rarely grumble.

As the man, the woman, and the boy stood at the gate, waiting for it to open, they naturally amused themselves looking at their fellow-wayfarers. It was Passover time, and therefore moonlight, and easy to see them. The ordinary people of a pedestrian country, where there are no railroads, and few wheeled vehicles, gathered outside the gate. There was a priest, and a couple of Levites, coming home from Passover, for Jericho was a priest city; one of the towns set apart for the use of the Temple-servitors, and the Priests. As

such, it was a staid and dignified city, full of people living on their incomes; for both Levites and priests were endowed men, and as such, held themselves aloof from the working-classes. There were several merchants, also, ahead of their camels and not unjustly anxious about them; and also quite a number of farmers, with a shepherd or two. The farmers were the most independent. The owner of a dozen acres or so of irrigated land was by no means an unimportant person, and his manner showed it.

When quite a group were gathered outside the Needle's Eye, the camels hired by the merchants and carrying their goods came swinging up out of the moonlit plain. There were three of them, with an Arab to lead each, and three or four armed servants of the merchants, following for a guard; and they were so large and stately and imposing, and so loaded with bales of goods, that the boy was quite sure that the big gate would be opened for them. Everybody was kind to the little Sons of Precept—the boys who went up to Jerusalem at twelve years old were called "Sons of Precept," and there were thousands of them every year—and, with the quick friendliness of boyhood, the lad had already made acquaintance with half the people in the group, so he asked one of the merchants if the gates would be opened.

"Oh, no," smiled the merchant, "the camel must go through the Needle's Eye like the rest of us. The soldiers are too lazy to open the great gate; and even if they were not, the city regulations rightly forbid it."

"But a camel is taller than the top of the gate, and wider than its sides."

"Wait, little son, and see."

Yussuf and Miriam, the grown-up people with the boy, smiled, and agreed to wait when he asked them.

It was very pleasant where they were, for the young night was fresh, and cool, and the moonlight turned even the dust of the road to frosted silver. When the little gate was opened at last, the Priest and the Levites went in first, and the others filed after, shephedr and citizen, and peasant and proprietor, all mingled and impatient. The merchants and the boy's people alone waited.

Now, when they first came up to the gate, the servants and camel-drivers had loosened the girths of the pack-saddle of each camel, in addition to half-untying the lashings of each bale. Everything was therefore ready; and the moment the gate was clear, the foremost camel was brought up to it and made to kneel. Half the men of the merchants' party leaped to work at its load, lest the soldiers grow too soon weary and shut the gate. Like lightning the bales were unlashed from the pack-saddle and carried through the postern—the Needle's Eye. In less time than it takes to tell it, the pack-saddle followed. Then the driver of the camel, whom he trusted, came and stood at his head and urged him forward. The camel tried to rise, but was prevented; then he began to protest, to bubble and groan, and to hitch forward on his knees. First, his long neck vanished through the postern; then, his fore-quarters; then his hump. Groaning, lamenting, yet obeying, with not one bale of all his rich burden left to him, his very pack-saddle gone, his high head bowed and always on his knees, that camel passed through the Eye of the Needle. Then they put on him saddle and bales again, and led him to the inn; and, with the merchant, the boy and his people followed.

Twenty years later, Jesus of Nazareth stood by the caravan-track outside a village in Perea, sadly watching a rich young ruler who went away sadly; for he had

just refused to give his riches to the poor and follow his Lord; for he had great possessions. As they stood there, a little group of heavy-laden pack-camels shuffled by, led by one wise and gray old beast, which half halted and turned its head, and bubbled as it passed. The Master said a word of greeting in the camel-drivers' tongue; then, smiling sadly, continued:

"Behold, it is easier for a camel to pass through the Eye of a Needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom; and yet, whosoever forsaketh father or mother, or wife or children, or houses or lands, for my sake and the kingdom's, they shall be returned unto him sevenfold, with Life Eternal."

CHAPTER IX

FAMINE IN THE DEKAPOLIS

AIL, swineherd. How far is it to Gadara?"

"Too far for weary feet. What does a Galilean here in the Dekapolis in famine-time?"

"West of the lake, we have had rains. No famine there. We made a circuit and came round the northern end, to see how you are faring."

"Foully, most foul. Knowing there was a famine, you must have brought food with you. Will you spare a bit of bread for a man starving?"

"Gladly; but for a bargain. Tell us how you, a Jew, are herding swine for Greeks in the Dekapolis?"

"The thing I call my master—may curses blister him—he was my boon-companion when I had money—would give me nothing else, when I was dying, and besought him bitterly. He thinks it a grand jest a Jew should herd the unclean beasts he makes his living by, selling their bacon to the Roman garrison at Herod's town."

"Your story, your story."

"Your name, then."

"Bardawid—Yussuf Bardawid, of Nazareth in Galilee."

"Surely not Yussuf the carpenter?"

"The same."

"Hail, rightful King of Israel."

"How know you me?"

"My father told me of you often."

"What, do I know him?"

"Nay; but all well-born men of Israel know of David's line, and so have heard of you."

"Were you well-born then—but no, I need not ask. In spite of rags and tatters, you show it."

"Nor need I ask more of your presence here. It well becomes the rightful king to see and know what happens to his people."

"Say on."

"Sir, I have an elder brother."

"Israel's law of inheritance is best for Israel; but under it the lot of younger sons is sometimes hard."

"My father loved me best."

"It sometimes happens."

"My elder brother loved me not."

"The two things go together."

"I tarried at the home place overlong, doing little, though dreaming great things. It is the custom for us younger sons to move to towns, and live by handicraft or trading. My brother grew impatient. He was right. I should have made a start in life before. He might, though, have been kinder. It is the custom for younger sons to receive education of the best, and goods or money for capital. My father is a very wealthy man. His house-servants, his very hired laborers, have more than they can eat. He gave me goods a-plenty to become a merchant, but in my anger at my elder brother I came here to get away into a different tetrarchy, where Gentiles mix with Jews. Young, angry, having money, I made acquaintances among the Gentiles. I thought them friends. I met their women. We Hebrews are a sober race—I drank. Frugal—I spent money with both hands. Soon it was gone. Then came the famine."

"A tragedy more common than it should be. What next?"

"I called on those who called themselves my friends, for loans. They refused me."

"Was there a woman?"

"One little jewel, of the dozens I had showered on her, would have saved my life. She flashed them in my face and laughed at me."

"Had you done no true good, no real kindness?"

"Alas, sir, none. A beggar in the street, whom I had fed, loaned me half his hovel. He died of the famine. I—I nursed him."

"What then?"

"Why then, I went to the chiefest of my boon-companions, and spoke to him so importunately, he gave me leave to feed his swine—and laughed. His servants took their cue from him. They give me no food. My work is to beat down the locust pods from the trees so the swine can reach them, and for pay I may build a fire of dry branches and roast a handful of the locust beans for my own use. May I speak to the lad with you?"

"Of course. Here is the bread I promised."

"God thank you. His name?"

"Yeshua Bardawid."

"Yeshua, son of David, your father's bread is good. In its strength I shall go for days. Learn from me not to disobey your father's advice as I did."

"Sir, if I were in a great famine and in your case, I would arise and go to my father."

"Now out upon the boy. I cannot."

"Why not? He loves you."

"I—cannot."

"Nay, sir, the boy speaks sense."

"Is it?—Can I?—Nay, he speaks love. I will arise and go to my father, while I have strength to stagger."

"God will go with you."

"Thanks, lad. Farewell—and—pray for me."

CHAPTER X

THE WINE-SELLER'S BOY

NCE upon a time, there was a small boy by the name of Simon, which was the commonest of all names in the Galilean hill-country. Wine-selling was a reputable trade at that time—not at all like saloon-keeping now; and he worked for a wine-seller, who was also named Simon. The business was in a Galilean hill-town named Cana, and one of the best-paying branches of its trade was the supplying of extra wine for weddings. Wine, at that time, was carried in leather bottles, made of goat-skin; and the most important duty of Simon, the boy, was to take the donkey belonging to Simon, the man, load the skins into the panniers, and deliver them where ordered.

Simon, the boy, was somewhat careless; so, when the sister of Nathaniel, the son of Tholmai, was married, he made an error and brought one goat-skin less of wine than was ordered. Nathaniel was away at the time, for he was a rising young politician, and had to keep in touch with John Baptist and his tremendous political and religious movement at Bethabara. He would be back for the wedding; but in the mean time, his mother was in charge, and when she discovered Simon's mistake, she had no one to send down to the village to correct it at the moment. Later it slipped her mind.

On the night before the wedding, Nathaniel Bartholmai returned, as he had promised; but, with the happy irresponsibility of politicians, he had invited a group of his political acquaintances, met in his visit to Bethabara. There was a certain Yeshua Bardawid, of Nazareth, with his mother, four male cousins named James and Joses, and Jude and Simon, some female cousins and their mother, and five guests of theirs from Capernaum; twelve or fifteen in all. There was nothing to do but send out for more wine; and naturally, as it could not well be delivered that night, it was promised in the morning.

The next morning Simon, the man, who should have been up at dawn, overslept himself, and rose in a bad temper. Simon, the boy, therefore, started very late, and in a bad temper also, for his master had cuffed him. Therefore, when he got out of sight from the vineyard, he beat Josephus, the donkey. Josephus, who had done nothing particularly wrong, resented this extremely; and by stubbornly halting, and then unexpectedly starting forward, and rubbing against a wall, he managed to dislodge his hastily-girthed panniers, in one of which was the leather bottle of wine, and in the other some stones to balance it. Josephus always resented carrying stones. They were making a short cut, at the time, and were in a bypath, a little shaded lane with nobody in sight. Josephus flourished his heels and brayed, in his new-found freedom. He was not vicious and did not really mean to hurt his rider; but, just at that moment, Simon had leaned forward to try and hold the panniers on, and Josephus flung him head-first against the wall. An outsider, looking on, would have seen nothing but a sturdy small boy thrown by a donkey, and falling in the shadow of a wall by the roadside. Oriental skulls are thick, the donkey was small,

and the outsider would have inferred that the boy was not seriously hurt, and would have laughed.

Simon, the boy, however, cared for none of these things. What he saw was a collection of shooting-stars more bright than day, which gradually quieted down and melted into a steady brilliance, in which he was afloat and submerged, as a fish is submerged and afloat in the sea. At first he was entirely absorbed in the sensation, which was delightful; for he was wet with light, as bathers are wet with water. Slowly, however, he saw that the light had voices. Had Simon spoken only one language, he would never have doubted that the voices spoke that language, whatever it was: but Simon was a bilingual boy, like most in Galilee, having a working knowledge of Greek, in addition to his native Aramaic. Therefore he found, even before he caught the drift of what the voices were saying, that their speech was not a language. He understood it as you understand your own thoughts before you put them into words, only much more clearly; and he did not hear it at all.

"Can he go on?"

"No, he will lie there for hours. Be careful, though. The blow has set ajar the doors of the citadel of life, and he can hear us."

"Let me look. Ah, I see. What matter, though? He can do nothing and will be sure that he has dreamed."

"I would like to change it into more than a dream."

"And have Oriel interfere? They have set Great Ones today to guard such scum; yet, my throne was above Oriel's once. Oriel, you guarded very badly, shielding the boy, but forgetting the brute."

"Nay, all is well." The other two voices had been

harsh, but this third one was golden. The first harsh voice began again:

"Leave him to his foolish peace. He knows no better. Look in, instead, and tell me of the Hated One."

"Look yourself."

"Do what you are told, slave. He made me stronger than you. See."

"Enough, my Prince. Enough. Spare. I do not like to look at him. It makes me think of that first hour when he bent over me, before—before—"

"Before we both followed one who led to greater things. If you, with your little powers, feel so, think how I must suffer. Now, obey."

"He comes up the far side of the last hill between Nazareth and Cana. I cannot see clearly, because of the Shining Ones between; but many of ours are with him too."

"What made him foolish enough to come down here and have himself born squarely into our prince's power? Had he stayed on his throne we could never have touched him. As it is, he is born a subject of the prince of this world and under the law of death."

"But surely, on the Lord of Life the law of death cannot be inflicted; and, if it could, our prince, Lucifer, Son of the Morning . . . "

"You speak of things too high for you, Antair. How is it, Oriel? Will you not answer? Yet, I remember a day when you came humbly to me, having the lesser glory, and we talked together of the exceeding power of him who is now toiling, like an ant among ants, up the slope of yonder hill, and will presently find himself one of the minor guests at an obscure hill-festival."

"The more sin yours, who turned away from him."

"So you can speak, if it be scornful, Oriel. Look again, Antair, and tell us what he does."

"He enters the house, washing his hands at the water-pots. There are many more at the wedding than were expected, and the house-mother's mind is full of gloomy thoughts, gray, like storm-clouds, and straining after this boy, whom we have here. She has even gone to the door to look for him, thinking of wine."

Simon, the boy, also thought of wine, remembered his errand, and struggled to get up and finish his work. A hand was laid on his shoulder—not a physical hand on his physical shoulder, of course, but one must use words of some kind to express facts spiritual—and a voice, the golden voice, said: "Peace. Lie still."

"That must be Oriel," thought the boy, and settled back, content to obey; yet troubled, also, at the coming trouble of the good customers who had dealt kindly with him.

"Yes, I am Oriel," said the voice. "As for their trouble, it shall be turned into joy."

The delight in Oriel's voice really seemed extreme, for the occasion. The boy checked himself, in the thought, as he might have done in a rude remark; but both the harsh voices chuckled.

"Look again, Antair, and tell us what you see."

"The mistress of the house is so greatly angry and troubled concerning the absence of this boy, that the smoke of her anger almost hides the house itself."

"Can it obscure the Hated One?"

"No, he shines through it. Look, Oriel, look. The Hated One, your best-beloved, shines with increasing brightness. His mother has just spoken to him. Betelgule, he is doing something I do not understand. Look, look, the brightness grows. You are not only stronger

than I, but, I acknowledge that, after all, you know more. Look, and tell me what it is. Look."

"You saw him do it on a larger scale, ages ago, Antair."

"Do you mean . . . when he—"

The harsh voices stopped.

"What is it, Oriel?" asked Simon. The question was, of course, involuntary. It merely flashed across his mind that he would like to know, and that Oriel could tell him.

"I do not know, Simon. If I turn to look, failing therefore to watch Betelgule and you, he might easily do you harm. He will go, presently. It has come to be the nature of these who were once our peers, that they must always go to that on which they look intently." The golden voice was very wistful. "Antair has gone already."

"But not I, Oriel." The harsh voice was doubly harsh now. "Nor shall I. The Hated One is making something, as he did in the first days when you and I sang together for joy. There, he has finished it. How should he, veiled in the flesh, retain the knowledge of how to make things? Your captain has flesh and bones, Oriel; quivering nerves and heart, to kill and hurt, Oriel; blood to pour out upon the ground, and he is ours, Oriel. He has come down into the realm of the prince of this world, whose law for flesh and blood is death. The cloud is clearing. Our captain stands outside the house, looking down, and I can see his thought. He is angry that one of his subjects, as your captain is now, should presume to use so much power in his Kingdom; and all to fill—to fill—what do you think, Oriel? Some paltry jars of wine."

The last words had been fainter, as if shouted from a distance, and Simon was conscious of some such sense

of relief as a field-mouse must feel when a hawk, which has been watching, flies away.

"Where did he go, Oriel?" Again the question was involuntary.

"His captain called him. There was cause. Through his error in detaining you, has come the opening of the work of the well-beloved Master. Again, to-day, the morning stars shall sing together, for joy."

The golden voice was growing fainter.

"Oriel, Oriel," called Simon, "do not leave me, Oriel."

"You are safe without me now," said Oriel, returning. "Your own angel can guard you. I came because this was one of their very great ones. Speak to him, Ryel."

"I am with you, Simon, as always, save for the last half hour." This voice, too, was golden.

"How shall I see you again, Oriel?"

"Follow the Beloved Master."

"I do not understand."

"Ryel will tell you."

The golden voice was much fainter. Presently Simon sat up, yawned, stretched, rubbed his eyes, and rose. The panniers lay by his side, and far down the road, but still in sight, grazed Josephus, the donkey.

"My head is still sore, Ryel," said Simon, rubbing it. Then, rubbing it again, he added:

"What a curious dream."

CHAPTER XI

JOHN FIREBRAND

ONTIUS PILATE, Procurator of Judea, Samaria, and Galilee," said the Nomenclator. Being a European and a servant, he said it pompously.

"Annas, the High Priest," announced a Temple Levite. Being an Asiatic and a free man, he said it courteously.

Centurions, secretaries, and attendant priests stood to one side and the two real rulers of the Oasis took seats at the far end of the great marble room, where none could hear them. There was a chair for Pilate, but Annas sat, Oriental fashion, on a divan. Annas began the thousand circumlocutions of Easter courtesy; but Pilate, in his downright Roman way, brushed them aside.

"Annas," he said, "in most things we are opposed, and must be. I have annoyed you concerning the eagles and the shields; not altogether from choice. I had to keep my officers contented. Later I must annoy you concerning the completion of the aqueduct. You, through the influence of your bankers with Sejanus, have checkmated me concerning shields and eagles, so that the net result is a temple to Jove, to keep the eagles in, outside the walls beside the city slaughter-house, and a most excellent respect in my mind for your intelligence. I have learned that Herod and Caiaphas

are figureheads; you, the real ruler. Yet, in this matter of John, son of Zacharias, our interests are the same. We cannot have an insurrection. My single legion could not hold your people quiet. The nearest European army large enough for that is three months' march away. But you know Rome. It might be two years, it might be four, but when the war was over, you would have no people. We need have no personal quarrel about religion. I am a Roman gentleman, you a Sadducee—Agnostics both. What think you of John Baptist?"

"John Firebrand, rather," Annas answered. "He is a torch and this people hay. He has found his Messias."

The scene was a room off the Temple at Jerusalem—neutral ground, for the outer Temple court was under the jurisdiction of both. The time was the year 26 A.D. The country was one of the oldest of the Orient. It had a seacoast without harbors and one narrow, fertile valley connected it with the inhabited world: but for all practical purposes it was an oasis, about fifty miles wide and a hundred and twenty long, surrounded by desert, irrigated to the last square inch; isolated as an island; civilized for two thousand years, and packed to suffocation with ten million Orientals, mostly descended from one man. It centered around a sunken valley ten miles wide, a hundred long, a mile deep and more fertile than the valley of the Nile or Babylonia. At the north end is a freshwater lake below sea level, fed from a snow-capped mountain. From it descends a rapid river, through volcanic ash, to an alkali lake at the south end, the furthest spot below sea-level on the surface of the globe. Between the lakes, the country is now a waste. Then it was one of the most thickly populated, best irrigated, wealthiest,

and most isolated communities on earth, and at that time, the only one where the one God was worshipped.

"Yes," repeated Annas, stroking his long beard, "John has found his Messias."

"Who is he?"

"A young carpenter of Nazareth in Galilee, John's distant cousin, Yeshua Bardawid."

"Joshua Davidson? Why Davidson?"

"He claims to be David's heir and rightful king."

"What is known of him?"

"Thirty years ago, the shepherds at Abraham's tower, near Bethlehem, where graze the Temple sheep, reported a vision of angels, saying the Messias was born. The High Priest punished them for superstition. A little later, magi from Persia came, asking for the Messias, the king of the world, for they had seen a conjunction of planets in the East, which betokened his birth. Herod, remembering the shepherds, called a council of rabbis, and, on their report, sent the Persians to Bethlehem. When they had gone, he flung a cordon of troops around the village, and killed all the boy babies under two years old. For eleven years, we thought him dead. Then one of the little Sons of Precept proved so brilliant that Gamaliel himself offered to instruct him. The boy gave his name as Yeshua Bardawid, and said his parents had lived in Bethlehem but moved away before the slaughter. We lost track of the lad in the Passover multitudes. That was eighteen years ago."

Pilate nodded meditatively. The religion of the oasis held latent dynamite enough for political explosions. It was based on a book begun fifteen hundred years ago by a great lawgiver, and added to from time to time by others. He foretold another and greater lawgiver, who should dominate the valley and sweep its

THE VOICE IN THE DESERT. St. John i. 23.

Tissot Picture Society, New York. Copyright by Tissot, 1895-96

"He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness."

influence, in widening circles, to the world's end. Other writers told of a coming Anointed One, and the approximate time before his coming had expired. Next to the lawgiver, the greatest figure in the popular fancy was a wild orator, who came out of the desert centuries before, redeemed the oasis from heathenism, restored the worship of the one true God, and vanished into the desert again, riding upon a whirlwind in a chariot of fire. He, too, foretold the coming of the Anointed One, and it was said that he would return to prepare the way.

"What says John Firebrand?" asked Pilate.

"He is a Nazarite, a desert-dweller, more like a wolf than a man. The people adore him. He calls them snakes, will not sleep in their houses, will not even eat their food, but lives on pemmican and honey brought in from the desert by himself. He tells them they are dirty—dirty in heart and mind and soul,—and emphasizes it by making them wash—for cleanliness of spirit, not of body. So many myriads washed, that we sent a senate committee to see whether he planned religion or politics.

"'Are you the Anointed One?' they asked.

"'No,' he thundered.

"'Are you the wild orator?'

"'No.'

"'Are you the predicted Prophet?'

"'No.'

"'Who are you?'

"'I am nobody; only a Voice. I am a voice out of the desert, crying: Prepare the way of the Anointed One; make his paths straight.'"

"Did the committee wash?" asked Pilate.

"No," answered Annas, dryly, "they felt no need."

Again Pilate fell silent, swiftly reviewing his cal-

culations. He had ten thousand men, Europeans. The native guards and police numbered about the same, but would turn against him. The population of the oasis ran twelve hundred to the square mile—a density possible only because the land was mostly in vineyards, date orchards, and fig-groves, and the pilgrimage system, with its tourist traffic, supported millions. Many of the cities were tolerably fortified. The oasis was so situated with respect to deserts, seas, and other river-valleys, that two of the four great transcontinental routes of international world-traffic were compelled to cross it, and could be cut by an insurrection. There must be no insurrection.

Annas, being an Asiatic, was content to wait. Now he went on:

"Yeshua Bardawid washed; not in cleansing, said John, but in preparation for the splendor of the coming kingdom. That makes him a member of the brotherhood of John's disciples. Many of John's lieutenants follow him. He told them that he fasted in the desert for forty days, and then refused to take the kingship of the world from the hands of Satan. John says the spirit of God descended upon him in the form of a dove."

"Why a dove?"

"Because no dove will abide carrion, nor the Spirit of God, an unclean act, or thought. Some power is on him. My men report it generally believed that he turned six tubs of water into wine at a wedding, the other day."

"Annas, Annas, do you believe all this?"

"Not a word, sir; I am a Sadducee."

"Yet, this is not what brought me here, Annas. The word you sent had something to do with world-finance."

"Most truthfully it did. You know our pilgrimage

system. Every man of oasis-stock, who has the money, must come to the Temple three times a year and bring his son. Practically, because of expense, it works out to one visit a year; but every native of the oasis in foreign lands comes also, at least once in his life, if he can get the money. There is a bank in every town in the empire, mostly run by our men. There is a colony of our men in every great city in the world. There are some at every feast from as far west as Britain, as far east as Delhi, where Rome does not rule, as far south as Madagascar, which Sejanus never heard of. None carries gold who can help it. To cash the letters of credit these men bring, we must have money, for though we balance one credit against another, there is always something left. Because we are the only city in the world to which responsible men come regularly from every city of the world, we have, through centuries, grown to be the clearing-house for the commercial paper of the world, and take quolbon on it—one seventh—fourteen per cent. We get the cash necessary to pay balances from the money-changers in the Temple court, who change all local monies into Jewish coinage and take quolbon on it—one seventh. Last house-cleaning day, this Yeshua Bardawid made him a whip of small cords and drove out the oxen and the sheep, and the dove-sellers, and overturned the tables of the money-changers, and mixed their accounts, and upset the banking business of mankind. Therefore, I sent word to you."

"He did you no great harm, I hear. You re-established the money-changers next day. What did he say?"

"He said it prevented prayer in God's house."

"Myself, I half agree with him, Annas. I do not pray myself, but if I did, your outer court would stop

me. Does Joshua Davidson object to the business, or to the place?"

"To the place."

"Why not move it then? The Temple would be cleaner."

"And bow the concentrated finance of the world to the fancies of one Galilean carpenter! Besides, if moved off the Temple property, I could not control it: and who would then guarantee the safety of finance at the world's clearing-house?"

Pilate understood perfectly, but left unmentioned, that Annas' private fortune would then cease to grow: Annas knew he understood and resented it. Annas also resented the fact that Pilate could not be bribed. In fact, Annas resented most things about Pilate, including the fact that he told the truth, and that he was there at all.

"Annas," said Pilate now, "I hear that Joshua Davidson and John Firebrand are running rival camp-meetings, and that Joshua Davidson has the larger crowds."

"True, Pontius Pilate. John ought to have followed his Messias, when he found him. The two together could have taken the oasis. As it is, they are working separately, and may quarrel."

"John has made a fatal mistake. As long as he stays apart from his Messias, we can safely neglect him."

"But how of Joshua Davidson? I cannot have my banking disturbed again. You Romans have taken from us the right of inflicting the death penalty. Slay me this Yeshua, lest he set up for king."

"Not so. I rather like the word that he would not serve Satan even for the throne of Caesar. It has imagination. Let be, and let him live."

"A messenger for Annas from Caiaphas, the High Priest."

"Admit him. Your pardon, Excellency, while I receive his message. Wait. This is public business, Omri. Say it aloud."

"Caiaphas, the High Priest, informs Annas that Herod, the Tetrach, asks the arrest of John, son of Zacharias, because, while in Judean territory, he has publicly and grossly slandered the lady Herodias, Herod's wife."

"What said he?"

"That when she left her husband, Philip, and went to live with Herod, they became common adulterers, just as would any other couple who did the same."

Pilate looked at Annas, and Annas looked at Pilate, in silence; then both put hand to lip. Some of their followers were frankly laughing.

"Merhercule," said Pilate, "John Firebrand is a bold fellow. I would not like to see him come to harm."

"Sir," said Annas, quick to take diplomatic opportunity, "the country can stand Yeshua Bardawid or John Firebrand, but not both. One or the other must be used to make an example."

"What more said John?"

"A Jew of the Temple taunted him that two competing prophets ran rival camp-meetings within a few miles of each other. There was no rivalry, he answered. He must decrease, while Yeshua increased. Then he turned to the crowd and spoke of Herodias."

"It is a resignation," said Annas, "but he should have followed Yeshua Bardawid. Together they would be irresistible. I cannot well refuse the request of a friendly rajah for a law-breaker. John Firebrand has brains, though he has not used them. Let him alone and he will use them, and join his cousin and then—

the whole oasis aflame, and an insurrection that will cost ten times a hundred thousand lives. Herodias will turn Herod against me for protecting John. It will be a civil war of three factions. In common fairness, you must hold me safe in it. Herod will say he fights for Rome, and will bribe Sejanus to agree with him; and Tiberius, the divine Emperor, will think that you and I uphold rebellion. Your orders, Excellency."

Pilate meditated a while, then rose. His lictors and bodyguard came to attention.

"Since there is no help for it," said Pilate, "give Herod John."

CHAPTER XII

THE PUZZLED CENTURION

AIL, Gaius."

"Hail, Cario; why so thoughtful?"

"For cause, Gaius, for cause. If ever a lone white man had cause for bewilderment among these saddle-colored natives, I am that man."

"Bewilderment? I have been told that you know more about natives than any other white man in Galilee, and that they will do more for you than for any other. You have been on this Capernaum detail for years, and have the natives in the hollow of your hand. If you are bewildered, what must the cause be?"

"It must be, and is, most strange. Nothing has happened like it since the old myths of Aesculapius; and they come to me and ask me what to do. The poor fellows trust me so, since I built them a synagogue."

"Explain."

"Then do not cry out your incredulity, till you hear all. Saw you nothing unusual, as you passed through the streets?"

"Nothing—except new buildings, which look strange in this land of age-old towns; yet, since Herod is making a new city here, I know the cause of that. Remember that we always met at Caesarea and that I have never seen Capernaum before."

"I had in mind not buildings, but men."

"I saw scornful rabbis, narrow streets packed with a saddle-colored multitude, a few Greeks here and there; nothing strange in that. Yet, wait. Do you mean the sick? I saw more lame and blind and sick than a crowd, even of these sickly Orientals, ought to have."

"I do mean the sick, my Gaius. How much I mean the sick it would be hard to tell. There are sick here from Jerusalem, from Damascus, from Tyre and Sidon. If it goes on much longer, they will come from Antioch, and Alexandria, and Babylon. All Syria is gathered together in this little town."

"Explain, *mi Cario,* elucidate."

" 'Tis a long story."

"I am comfortable in your quarters, on your couch, drinking your wine. Your slaves are well-trained, and made my waiting easy. Being comfortable, a long story does not daunt me."

"Well . . . . there is a man."

"There always is . . . . except when . . . . 'tis a woman. Who is he?"

"A Galilean of the hill-country, a carpenter moved here to Capernaum, and set up for a rabbi. They made him chief preacher of my synagogue here; not so much for his preaching, I suspect, as because they say that he is the direct heir of the old dynasty, and but for us Romans, would now be king of this whole country."

"For armed men in the streets that might be sufficient cause, but what has it to do with a town full of sick people?"

"This. One day the man was preaching in the synagogue—there is some story about a net-full of fishes before that, but I never got the rights of it—when an insane man in the congregation began to cry out. The

IN THE VILLAGES THE SICK WERE BROUGHT UNTO HIM. St. Mark vi. 56.

Tissot Picture Society, New York. N 32. Copyright by Tissot, 1895–96.

"And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets."

preacher ordered him out into the open space before the rostrum and—cured him."

"Cured him? Why—"

"Remember that you were not to interrupt with incredulity. Of course, I do not expect you to believe. Besides, what does it matter? It is not what really happened, but what the natives think has happened, that settles what they do. Grant, for the sake of argument, that he cured him—or did not cure him. The natives think he cured him."

"Well, let it be so. What next?"

"Why, next, he went as guest to the home of a pupil, and there they found no dinner; for the pupil's mother, or mother-in-law, or some one—whoever it was that had stayed home to cook—was sick with a sharp attack of our sudden burning fever. So the rabbi bent over her and rebuked the fever and cured her, and she got up and prepared the dinner."

"How convenient. But, of course, you do not believe such tales?"

"I have investigated the cure of the maniac, which was done in public, and, as it happens, I do believe it. But it does not matter in the least. It is not what I believe, or you, but what this great uneasy mass of treacherous natives, always on the edge of rebellion, believes, which makes the difference; for they act on that belief. They believe these two cures most devoutly. Yet even that does not matter now. The affair is far past the stage when those two cures make any difference. They simply served, true or false, to convince the common people that this rabbi could cure the sick and madmen. So, what should they do but gather up most of the sick in town, and all the madmen, and bring them to the house where this rabbi stayed? And he cured them."

"Oh, come now, Cario!"

"He cured them. It was the sabbath when they had their synagogue, and you know the superstition of these people which prevents their doing anything till sunset on the sabbath. Therefore it was after sunset when they began to gather in the street outside his house. My men reported the crowd to me, as they do all night gatherings—"

"Yes, I have heard that your discipline is good."

"Thanks—and so I took guards and went myself to look at them. The street, in front of the house, was packed solid, and bright with many torches. The crowd was most confused, for it was made up of little groups of five or six men, each group carrying a sick man or struggling with a maniac. I had known, of course, but had not fully realized, how many madmen there were about Capernaum. Some day, my Gaius, we will have hospitals for such, as we have now for soldiers."

"Treat madmen, civilians, as we treat legionaries? Not so. Go on."

"The rabbi was standing in the doorway of the house, with a torch-bearer on either side. They carried each sick man to him, and the rabbi leaned down and spoke to each. Then the sick man rose from his litter and walked off."

"Cured, I suppose?"

"They looked cured. I investigated a dozen cases later and found them cured. Spare your sneers. It does not matter to us whether they were cured or not, but only that the crowd thought they were. The madmen were different. Each was forced, struggling and howling, before the rabbi. He spoke to each, short, sharp, stinging as the crack of a whip, the way that you or I would speak to a mutineer before we struck.

Then the madman tore away from the hands of those who held him, fell, writhed shrieking, then rose cured, and quiet, and sane. I watched for half an hour, saw that there was no intention nor even, so long as the rabbi was there, any possibility of riot, and came away. My men tell me that before the supply of sick and insane gave out and the crowd dispersed, it was past the middle of the middle watch."

"Were there so many mad? You must be a crazy crowd here in Capernaum."

"*Habet, amice.* Yet, remember that in other towns you note only the violently insane, and even them only when their madness is upon them. You never note the insane who are quiet, the feeble minded, the idiots, the partially-mad. Oh no, there were no more here in Capernaum than elsewhere. The old rock-tombs and quarries, just above the edge of the irrigated land, along both sides of Jordan valley for an hundred miles, are full of lepers and of madmen. There are a thousand myriads of people in this land, and ten madmen to each myriad is not a large proportion; not so large as we have at Rome. Every deserted sandpit in the Campania is full of them, as you must know."

"*Habet, mi Cario.* Go on."

"Next morning the rabbi left town. His reason, as reported to me, was that, since all Galilee needed him, he could best help by going to and fro. So he added the blind, the lame, the dumb, and the paralyzed to his list of cases, and has been going through the country on foot, curing them and dragging vast crowds after him. Surely you must have heard of him?"

"The Good Physician of Nazareth? Certainly I have heard of him. But what has that to do with the anxieties of the Commander of Capernaum?"

"Why, this. When the news spread—and it spreads

further every day—that there was, at Capernaum, a rabbi who cured the blind and lame, deaf, dumb, paralyzed, and insane, without fee or reward, the sick began to arrive. They came singly, then in squads, in centuries, in regiments, in brigades, and legions, and corps. The rich came first, then the well-to-do, then the poor. Many went on to overtake the rabbi. Many, too feeble to go further, settled here to await his return. Those that have money, live on it. Those that have none, must beg. Beggars are never so importunate as when they are far from home, and must eat or die. We are congested with the riff-raff of humanity, cluttered to death with the misfit deformities of Palestine. The utterly wretched of all Syria, and their friends, have settled on us, like locusts on a garden. I have scourged them into something dimly imitating order, camped the overflow on bits of waste land outside the town, and fed a few, after I found that, if I did not feed, I must go to the trouble and expense of burying them. My clients would break the heart of Sulla the Merciless, himself—after they had turned his stomach. Ugh."

"Send for this rabbi to come back."

"I did. He came. My messenger met him returning to stand trial before a commission of their priests because he had cured the leper. That word spread, too. Fortunately, their own law forbids walled towns to lepers, so I can keep them out; but in the fields, outside the town, I have the most awful collection of the lepers of Syria that was ever made. No guards will stay by them, so I hold them together by a dole of a bit of bread each day. I must do that or bury them."

"What does the rabbi?"

"The rabbi cures them all, a couple of hundred a day, a few dozen of each kind. As fast as he cures a dozen, a score of new ones arrive. My people have been

begged from till we have no more to give. My own income will not stand the strain. Besides the sick, we have the problem of the cured. Blind men who can see and want to work; sick men who are well and want to work; lame and deformed men who are whole, in mind and limb, and want work; lepers, with skins healthy and rosy as little children, who want work. Everybody wants work, or money to travel home. I pack them off as fast as I can, but they still accumulate; and the rulers of the synagogue and all the leading natives of the town are desperate, and want me to close the gates to all sick strangers."

"What says Herod?"

"Herod is in one of his long drinking-bouts. He laughs and says he wants to see the rabbi."

"Then why not do as the townspeople wish and shut the gates to all sick strangers?"

"Man, I have seen the rabbi; at a distance, of course, for all rabbis think themselves defiled by the approach of Romans, and must disinfect and purify themselves; and I would not inflict that duty upon him. He has work enough already. Still, I have seen the rabbi; and therefore, I have not the heart to shut off from him his broken people. Besides, it would cause a riot. Also, when one thinks of it, it *is* rather a cruel thing to keep all these wretched and miserable folk from reaching any one they think may help them. They are his people; and, in a way, my people too, since I am responsible for them."

"Cario, you have not a Roman heart; though how you got a softer one, among these cruel Orientals, I do not see. Build you an altar to Pity, as the Athenians have done, and then do the only sensible thing left you. Send to this rabbi. See that he fully understands the trouble he is making; explain why you have not stopped

him, and tell him to go away from Capernaum and move about through the country, and take his sick with him. Tell him to move slowly, so that those sent on from here may overtake him. Tell him to keep moving, so that he burden no other place with them as he has burdened Capernaum. Above all, tell him to let it be known that he will never settle and heal at Capernaum, for any length of time; if he stay, he will rest, and work few cures, and if he work many cures, he will only stay a day or two. That will keep them from settling here to wait for him. Then when any lame, or blind, or sick, or insane, or lepers come here from a distance, send them on to him, wherever he may be, and you are saved."

"And saved by my friend. This rabbi is a reasonable man, more like a practical Roman, than one of these hysterical natives. Therefore he will do this thing. You have solved my problem, Gaius."

"Then, in reward, use this purse to feed your loathly lepers, till you can disperse them. Make me their benefactor. Nay, do not mistake me. It is a sacrifice to friendship and fortune. The gods are fairy-tales, I am not merciful, and I do not believe in your rabbi. But I would have some hand in this, your problem, and would pay my way, unknown to him, for a sight of this curiosity among rabbis. I gather that he is healing, somewhere, and the sick I saw were going to him."

"True."

"Take your cloak, then, and your sword—they tell me that you walk without a sword among these people, but that is folly—and we will stand and look at him. I too would see lepers made into healthy children."

"I said not that, but only 'healthy as children.' That much is true."

"Agreed; but I do not believe."

"Then, as he once said, ' Come and see.' "

CHAPTER XIII

THE BOARD OF INQUIRY

HO left the door open?"

"Maria, widow of Alphaeus Cleopas—your own mother, Jude, and in her own house. She was so pleased and proud that the great rabbis should come, that she went upstairs to the guest-chamber with the first of the delegation; and left the last of the Pharisees to shut the door; and he didn't."

"He certainly didn't. Upstairs, downstairs, and the courtyard are all so packed with strangers that we can hardly move; and half of them are ill."

"We ought to be very proud, Jude. Yeshua's fame has spread through all Syria. There are sick here who have crawled from Tyre and Sidon, and Damascus, and have waited for weeks till Yeshua came back to Capernaum. Joses tells me that dozens of them come to him, because he is a son of Cleopas, and therefore Yeshua's cousin. Some have even come to Levi, because he, too, is a son of Alphaeus Cleopas. The sick are almost desperate. They have spent all their money, begged Capernaum bare, and are starving."

"Yes. Some one has just stolen all the food off the kitchen table—and most of the dishes. Listen. There is John calling."

"The Master, Yeshua Bardawid, awaits all the brethren, with Simon, and Thomas, and Andrew, and

Philip, and Nathanael, in the upper guest-chamber. Pass the word, pray, good people."

"Coming, coming. Here are James Zebedee and Jude. Let us through, please, good folk."

The time was the year 26 A. D., the place, the Bethsaida suburb of Capernaum, and the occasion, the trial of Yeshua Bardawid, lately of Nazareth, for flagrant violation of the national quarantine laws. When James and Jude reached the great upper chamber, they found order already crystallizing out of the chaos. James, the son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealous, with John Zebedee, all three of them Yeshua's cousins, were rapidly arranging the priests, scribes, and rabbis of the delegation, in long rows, seated tailor-fashion, on the floor of the guest-chamber, and of the rear verandah. The Master took his place, standing in the doorway between verandah and guest-chamber, and the crowd in the courtyard buzzed as it saw him. Then the Twelve seated themselves at his feet and the trial began.

There were delegates there from every city and town in Judea and Galilee. The oldest rabbi of the Jerusalem delegation rose, and recited the order of the Sanhedrin, authorizing the investigation, and went on:

"A man came to Meri Bar Meri, a priest on duty at the Temple, saying that you had sent him to report that he had been a leper, and that you had cleansed him by touching him, thus breaking the leper-law and becoming legally a leper yourself, until cleansed."

"True."

"You then obeyed the law, ceased to enter synagogues, houses, or walled towns, withdrew into the waste lands, and camped there, until you received word from the Sanhedrin to meet us here, at your legal domicile, for trial. Your disciples remained with you, thereby breaking the law and becoming legally lepers."

"True."

"The deaf, dumb, blind, lame, sick, and demonized, in crowds, companies, and regiments, resorted to you, contrary to law, and you cured them. By that association, they became legally infected. You have disregarded the laws of ritual purity, and half Galilee is unclean by your means. More than a million Galileans, breaking through the shattered fragments of our sanitary laws, now stand legally as lepers, by your means. Moreover leprosy, by our theology, is held to be a deserved punishment, sent by God upon the leper for his sins."

"True."

"We speak by the authority of the High Priest and the Sanhedrin. Yeshua Bardawid, called sometimes Yeshua Natzri, I summon you to show cause why you, and your disciples with you, should not be declared lepers and outcasts, and banished to the wilderness, for interfering with the just punishment of God, and for breaking the leper-laws of Moses."

There was a dramatic pause. The fate involved was far worse than death, and there was ample power and authority to enforce it. Then the Master spoke.

What he said, had nothing to do with the matter of the leper. He did not even mention it. He told them the Good News; that God is the Father of man and that His kingdom was at hand. Then, speaking of himself in the stately Aramaic third person, he said that the Son of Man had come to found that kingdom; and so, was still.

The speech, as has been said, had no direct bearing on the violation of the leper-law. Indirectly, of course, it was a perfect defense. As this defense, through all the glamor of its matchless eloquence, unfolded like a flower, the priests and older rabbis grew more and more restless. Something definite had to be reported to

Annas and Caiaphas, the High Priests. It was, of course, ridiculous to try a man, who could cure lepers, for disregarding the infection of leprosy; but that was the mistake of Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin. The commission had been ordered to try the Master, in unspoken, but evident hope that they would dispose of him before he could break up the financial equilibrium of the nation, by again cleansing the Temple of the money-chargers; but Annas had over-reached himself, by putting a majority of country rabbis on the commission. Eminent men, from every town and city of the nation, would not condemn the Head of the House of David, and their rightful king, for breaking the leper-laws by curing lepers; especially when they suspected that the motive back of the prosecution was to keep the private income of an unpopular prelate undisturbed. But, if not condemned, on what ground could the Master be cleared? The real reason, that the whole trial was ridiculous and based on personal enmity, must never be acknowledged.

It was in this frame of mind that the leaders of the commission seized on the phrase "Son of Man" in the Master's speech. It was a quotation from Ezekiel, and a definite claim to be a prophet; much as the phrase "Centurion" would have been a definite claim to be a soldier. But, if a man be a prophet and can cleanse lepers, he can also cure other diseases; and eminent men, picked for learning and importance, from the cities of a nation, are mostly elderly men and not free from aches and pains. One grave rabbi, looking like a white-maned old lion, rose and said as much.

"What is your trouble?"

"My eyesight is dim."

"Have you faith?"

"Yes."

"Then see!"

The man clapped his hands to his eyes, took them away, looked upward, and began to intone a psalm of thanksgiving. A few rapid questions and answers, and the assembly knew him cured, and shivered in hope and awe. The power of the Lord was present to heal them. They rose, and man after man came to the Master. A question, an answer, a word, and each was made whole. Jude and James Zebedee found time to speak again.

"This settles their verdict, James."

"There will be no verdict, Jude."

"How so?"

"Look at the crowd in the courtyard."

It was true. Word had gone out that Yeshua Bardawid was even now curing cases, and the crowd had gone wild. There were men there who had tramped a hundred miles and waited a month for such a moment, and they would not be denied. Commission or no commission, they would reach the Master if they could. By the inner stairway and along both ends of the verandah, they forced themselves upward, mingling with the members of the commission and pressing towards the doorway where Yeshua Natzri, surrounded by his disciples, cured all who came.

Suddenly a tile fell. The whole multitude was startled, for so great was the press that it could easily happen that the whole house might fall. The flat-roofed, two-story Galilean houses were covered with clay or cement; but the verandah roofs, outside the parapet, were tiled. It was on the verandah, therefore, that the tile fell, and the people made way at once, leaving an open space. Heavy blows, as of a pickax, sounded on the verandah roof; another tile fell, then another, then a whole mass of them, leaving space through which one could see a couple of men with mattocks. In

less time than it takes to tell, so desperately they worked, there was a great ragged hole. Through this, still in desperate haste, was lowered a light cot-mattress, bunched together and swung on ropes, and with a man on it. A dozen willing hands received him, for, in a flash, the crowd realized that this was the reckless expedient adopted by a bedridden man to reach the Master. Being unable to force a way through the crowd into the house, the man had caused his bearers to take him up the outer staircase to the unoccupied flat roof, and to make a hole in the verandah tiling.

"Such great faith should be rewarded, Jude."

"True, James, but who will mend our tiling?"

"Hush, the Master speaks."

"Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee."

A murmur went round the guest-chamber and verandah. The men of the commission were accurate theologians, and understood to a nicety the religious implications of language. Here was an answer to the whole problem of curing sinful lepers. Their sins were forgiven too. Yet, only God can forgive sins. For a man to claim the power, except as an agent, is for that man to claim to be God. The Master had said nothing about acting as an agent. He was guilty either of blasphemy or of Deity.

"Why do you think evil in your hearts?" said the Master, addressing the members of the commission: "Which is easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven, or to say, Arise, take up thy bed and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"—here he turned to the shaking sick man lying, with clasped hands, at his feet —"I say unto thee, Arise, take up thy bed and go to thy house."

There was a moment's pause. Then the sick man

THE PALSIED MAN LET DOWN THROUGH THE ROOF. St. Mark ii. 4.

The Jersey City Printing Company, Jersey City, N. J. Copyright by Tissot, 1895-96.

"They uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay."

tried to rise. To his own amazement, he succeeded. He stooped again, rolled up his mattress, swung it over his shoulder, and backed off, thanking and praising, not the Master, but God. The crowd made way for him as he backed through; then it surged forward. Wild before, it was now frantic. The verandah was already as full as it could well hold, but a mass of men charged up its stairs, and, as the news spread into the house, pressure on the inner doorway showed that the inner stairway also was invaded. The disciples formed around the Master to protect him, and Jude spoke:

"End this, Yeshua, or the house will be about our ears."

"Very well, Jude. Cephas, we will go to the market place, and teach and cure the people there."

Simon Stone, the captain of the fishing-boat belonging to the firm of Zebedee and Jonasson, called his men:

"Andrew, Thomas, Philip, Nathanael, precede the Master to the market-place. James and John Zebedee, Jude and James, and Simon Barcleopas, his cousins, follow him. Make way, good folk, make way!"

CHAPTER XIV

THE RESCUE OF LEVI

AKE way, good people, for Yeshua Bardawid, the prophet of Nazareth. He goes to the market-place, where there is more room, and there will teach and heal those who come to him."

They got out of the house with very little trouble, for the crowd made way; and, in the midst of a tumultuous multitude, the disciples surged toward the heart of Capernaum. In the press, James found himself again by the side of Jude.

"That was like Yeshua," Jude grumbled: "Here he earns the enmity of the High Priest and upsets national finance, just at the beginning of his work; yet that same High Priest must pass on his claim to be Messias. Then, he cures a man at the Sheep Market, and gets himself brought before the Temple Sanhedrin, for Sabbath-breaking. The case is undecided yet, because he sets them discussing whether he is Messias, and they reject him. Then he begins curing people, and traverses Galilee, preaching in all the Synagogues, and healing everything that needs it, and this leper applies, and he touches him; touches him, mind you; and so, gets us into all this. The common people would have declared him Messias, and he throws success away when it is in his hand. Then he turns this trial, to-day, into a great triumph, and is practically declared a prophet, when he

goes and spoils it all by claiming to forgive sins."

"Perhaps he can forgive sins. The Temple needed cleansing. The impotent man needed healing, and it is surely not wrong to do good on the Sabbath. Perhaps he had to touch the leper to cleanse him. Perhaps, to cure this palsied man, he had to forgive him. Remember, Jude, John Baptist says Yeshua is Messias."

"He is my cousin, James, and yours. Messias he is; but we are princes of Israel ourselves, if we had our rights."

"Jude, Jude, he has always been a true friend, too. Remember when you pinned the robe of the schoolmaster of Nazareth to the ground with your new knife, when we were all boys, and Yeshua was willing to take the punishment?"

"Well, I confessed, and saved him, didn't I? Still, he is a dear good fellow, and I should not grumble; but he does manage things badly sometimes."

"Not badly; only differently."

"Well, well, James, perhaps you are right. The truth is, I am troubled by that fellow who sneered of Levi. Mother keeps asking Yeshua to do something for Levi."

"Jude, you and Simon, and James, and Joses were legally right; but you were too harsh with Levi about that property."

"Well, we gave him all he asked at last, didn't we? If we told him what we thought of him, at the same time, that was no reason why he should use the money to buy a publican's place here in Capernaum, right at our doors, too. That was really why we moved to Nazareth. We could not stand the disgrace. It has broken Mother's heart—and he our Father's son and a Prince of Israel, as that fellow from Jerusalem truly said—Look!"

"What is it?"

"This is not the way to the market-place. This street leads round about, past the lake shore and Levi's booth. Yeshua is going to Levi."

"Then follow. You sons of Alphaeus Cleopas are not the heads of the house!"

"Content, content, James Thunder. I did not mean we were. But I am sorry for Levi. He is the disgrace of the family, just as Yeshua is its head, and they have never met since Levi went and made himself a—publican!"

"Since he flung off in a rage, like the young fool he was, and made himself the worst thing he could think of, because you elder brothers were too harsh with him. Poor Levi, he was a lovable boy. Now Yeshua will smite and end it."

There was, indeed, some basis for this conclusion. There is no easy way to make plain to a modern the full disgrace of what Levi had done. If the son of an English bishop were to open a roulette house in his father's see-city; if the son of a South Carolina planter were to turn republican, and manipulate the local negro vote; if a Spanish grandee were to become a blackleg gambler, convicted of cheating, infected with smallpox, and married to a peasant; and if it were possible to combine these disgraces in one person, the result would approach the disgrace of a publican in Galilee in the year A. D. 27, but could not reach it. One would have to make the man a convicted traitor to his nation, besides, to get the full flavor of a publican's degradation. No man spoke to a publican, except on business. If he so much as caught a publican's eye, he made a sign which meant purification from defilement. If he touched a publican, he went away and took a bath, and disinfected his clothes. If he neglected this, the people mobbed him.

The Jew has long been eminent for careful and painstaking hatred, with patient and intelligent attention to detail; and he developed it on his publicans.

Levi had thrown himself to the dogs, and found, too late, that dogs are poor companions. From the gossip of the crowd that surged each day around his booth, he was posted—none better—on the history of Yeshua, his cousin. He knew when the family returned to Capernaum. He had even, after nightfall, gone and looked at the outside of his father's house, into whose familiar rooms he could not enter now; no, not even to lay his tired head on his Mother's knee. He often met his brothers in the town, and turned down some side street to avoid them; for there was no means of return, no way of repentance, left open to him.

Now he looked up from his books in the publican's booth, and saw his brothers coming, with James and John, and Yeshua, his cousins, with a great crowd round about him. It was too late to escape. He could not leave his post; there was no time to gather up the money on the table. So he pretended to see nothing, and gazed at his accounts till a pregnant silence and the stare of many eyes forced him to look up.

He found a very great crowd assembled in the street, leaving a semi-circle in front of his booth empty except for his kin. James and John Barzebedee, James and Simon and Jude Barclopas, had grouped themselves behind Yeshua Natzri, and all were looking at him. Yeshua Natzri looked deep in his eyes and read the thoughts there; read him to the very last atom and shred of pride and penitence. The silence grew more and more tense with feeling, like a storm-cloud looming to the lightning-flash. The crowd, the brethren, Levi himself, expected a blasting retribution. It is not meet that a prince, even a peasant-prince, should make

himself a disgrace, a shame, and an outcast. Yeshua, as head of the family, had a right to punish; and, very surely, he had the power. He who can cure leprosy, can inflict it.

At last he said, "Follow me!"

A sort of visible gasp went over the crowd. "Follow me" was the idiom by which a rabbi invited scholars to receive his instruction; and, by a grim jest, it was also the phrase by which an insurgent leader enlisted his staff. Yeshua Bardawid, just declared by national convention the prophet of Nazareth, was offering Levi a place among his helpers. Not smitten, not condemned, not even criticised, the "Disgrace of the family" was offered the same place as his respectable brothers on the King's personal staff.

Yeshua Bardawid turned and walked away. When the unbelievable offer finally filtered into Levi's consciousness, and he saw what the Master meant for him, he sprang up, forgot the money on the table in front of him, and ran after his Lord. The rabble promptly stole the money, but he did not care. He could replace it. Simon and Levi, and James and Jude, four stalwart sons of Alphaeus Clopas, followed their cousin Yeshua, the Head of the House, to the market-place; and, while Yeshua was speaking to the people, and curing the sick, the four brothers, no longer with a family disgrace among them, had time for a few words, and a handclasp, in the intervals of marshaling the crowds.

"Jude—James—Simon—forgive me."

"Yeshua thinks we were too hard on you, Levi. Forgive us."

"How is mother?"

"Well. She has prayed for this."

When the long hard tumultuous task of curing the sick was finished, it was four sons of Alphaeus Clopas,

THE CALLING OF ST. MATTHEW.
St. Matthew ix. 9.

American Tissot Society, New York. Copyright by Tissot, 1895–96.

"And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, and he saith unto him, Follow me."

not three, who escorted their kinsman, Yeshua Bar-dawid, to the home of their mother. There is no record of what that mother, in happy, gasping thankfulness, sobbed out upon Levi's shoulder, but we can guess it; for, from that hour, Levi the son of Alphaeus is always called "Matthew"; and Matthew means "The Gift of God."

CHAPTER XV

THE HORNS OF HATTIN

HE Horns of Hattin are conspicuous rocks, overlooking the plain of Hattin; and the plain of Hattin is behind the top of the hill back of Magdala. It is about six or seven, or eight miles from Capernaum, depending on where you start; for ancient Capernaum was a long narrow coast-town, five or six miles long, and only one house thick, except in the middle. Bethsaida was the southern suburb, Chorazin the northern, and Capernaum proper, the centre.

It was some weeks after the rescue of Levi-Matthew that Yeshua Bardawid led the multitude out along the Nazareth road to the Horns of Hattin, and spread them over the plain. Jude, following, fell in by John as they tramped out, and spoke with him.

"Yeshua looks different, John. Why?"

"He fasts since yesterday, and was all night in prayer."

"Has he told what he plans to-day?"

"Only a word, but I guess more. He will choose twelve disciples, one to rule each tribe of Israel."

"Do you know them?"

"I can guess."

"Will Joses be the twelfth?"

"No. One of us must stay home to take care of the two mothers. That will be Joses."

"But he is here."

"He will stop at the farm. Forty acres take some care, and he loves the work as you others do not."

The farm of Alphaeus Clopas, now the property of James, the eldest son of Alphaeus, lay at the edge of the plain of Genessaret, where the Nazareth road begins to climb the hill. Joses spoke to Yeshua as they reached it, then turned off there. Yeshua, the Master, went on up the long hill to the level pasture-land at the top, turned off also, crossed the pasture, and took his place on a conspicuous rock or small crag, jutting out of the hillside. Understanding that he would speak, the crowd ranged itself in concentric circles, and sat down.

It was one of the most motley crowds the world has ever seen. Sickness knows no social rank, and curiosity no class. There were sick from all Syria. In one little group a man from Damascus, with a paralyzed arm, stood by two Phoenicians, one from Tyre, and the other from Sidon, and a Samaritan, who sought them out because, from race-hostility, he did not feel at ease among the Jews. There were many Greeks from the Dekapolis, a few Roman soldiers on leave, and one group of Arabs, subjects of king Aretas, conspicuous, because they were on horseback; and courageous, or they would not have ventured into Herod's semi-hostile tetrarchy. Still, the bulk of the crowd was Galilean, with a sprinkling of Jews from Judea; among whom the Scribes and Pharisees, detailed by the national legislature, the Sanhedrin, to follow and observe the Master, were conspicuous; as much so, in their way, as the Arabs.

The Master swept his eye over the crowd. When he had looked every man in the face or, at least, had seemed to do so, he raised his hand. All talking ceased,

and he began to speak. It was only a few words, telling what he meant to do. Then he called his men:

"Simon Barjonas, surnamed Cephas."

A middle-aged lake sailor, captain of the fishing-boat belonging to the firm of Zebedee and Jonasson, came forward.

"Stand there. James and John Barzebedee, surnamed Boanerges."

Two of the crew of the fishing-boat came forward and took their places by Simon."

"Nathanael Bartholmi, Philip, surnamed, 'of Bethsaida'."

Two Galilean hill-villagers came forward.

"Andrew Barjonas; Thomas, surnamed Didymus."

Two more of the crew of the fishing-boat took their places on the other side of Simon, their captain.

"James, surnamed the Little, Simon, surnamed the Zealot, Levi, surnamed Matthew, and Jude, surnamed Lebbaeus."

The four brothers, sons of Alphaeus Clopas, and cousins of the Master, came and stood beside the others. There were now eleven men in the line, and, though James and John Zebedee had a house in Jerusalem, yet the whole eleven were Galileans. The Master paused, and searched the crowd with his eyes. He seemed distressed, and more than one drop of sweat rolled from his forehead. At last he spoke:

"Judas of Kerioth."

A hawk-eyed, black-haired, slender man, whose little peculiarities of dress showed him a Jew and not a Galilean, came forward and completed the line. The Eleven were surprised. They had not expected the man of Kerioth.

Having chosen his men, the Master promptly set them to work. Those moderns who think that there

were only some thirty miracles, misread the story. There were so many more than thirty, that it is a weary and a pathetic thing merely to tell of them, and the Evangelists did not try. They told one or two specimens of each type and kind, and then said that there were many more. The Master came down into the plain; the Twelve marshaled the crowd, passed them one by one before Him, and moved them quickly away, as he cured them.

When, at last, no more sick presented themselves, he went a little way up the hill again, where everyone could see him, sat down, and began to speak. That speech is the most famous sermon in the world, the only perfect system of ethics, the best commentary on the Ten Commandments, the entrance-gate into the world to come. When he had finished it, he returned to Capernaum. On the walk back, the newly-chosen Twelve foregathered. Simon Barjonas, the captain of the fishing-boat, whom the Master had surnamed Cephas, began. (The European form of Cephas is Peter, and signifies "a stone.")

"You are silent, John Thunder. Why?"

The Master had surnamed James and John Zebedee "Boanerges," which means "Sons of Thunder," for they were notable for high, quick temper. John, the youngest of the Twelve, looked up and smiled.

"I was wondering just why Yeshua put the man of Kerioth among us. We welcome you, Judas, and shall grow better acquainted. You have followed him now for some weeks, but we did not expect you to be one of us, because there are others who have been with him longer and seem closer to him."

"Judea must be represented," said Iscariot, smiling.

"We ought, all twelve, to be very proud," said Thomas, surnamed Didymus, which means "a twin."

He was the oldest of the Twelve except Simon Stone, and had a magnificent beard, which he stroked as he spoke.

"We are, Thomas Twin." This was from Little James, the eldest of the Master's cousins, and a large man, of stately bearing, as befitted the next heir to the throne, after the Master.

"What are his plans for us?" The question was from Simon Zelotes. The Zealots were the war-party in politics, advocating rebellion; but the surname was given because of character, as well as political opinion.

"Zealous Simon has hopes for war," laughed Judas Lebbaeus. Lebbaeus means "hearty," or "cordial," or "jolly," and expresses, clearly, a well-known charm of character. Jude was a red Jew; blonde, like the Master: but, unlike the Master, he was short and square and plump.

"And why not, Jolly Jude?" said Andrew Barjonas, Simon Stone's brother. "Nathanael Bartholmi, here, could raise the hill-country, and we could do something around the lake ourselves."

"Yes, Nathanael would make a good strategist! The Master himself said that 'in him is no guile.' "

"He could take orders as well as the rest of us, Jude" —this from Philip—"The Master will do the planning."

"James Lightning and Levi God's gift," (Matthew means 'the gift of God') "do we fight?"

"I hope so, Simon Stone," said James.

"I do what Yeshua orders," said Levi.

"Then go forward. He has finished talking with the men he cured, and looks 'round as if he wanted one of us."

Levi-Matthew took his place by the Master's side, and the others closed up and followed. The great crowd tramped before and after in a long column, and the

hot dust rose above it in the sunshine. When they came among houses again, the tramp of so many thousands brought all the housewives to the doors, so that the Master walked for miles between a double row of spectators. Dozens of children hailed him. He never forgot a name or a face; and, gravely smiling, greeted each by name.

"Look!" said Judas Iscariot; "What a man for a general. He could know by name every soldier in a whole legion. Think of wasting such a talent on children!"

There was a man watching, outside the house, when they reached it. Half the crowd dispersed to their homes, but many waited outside. The Master and the Twelve went in, and Maria, the mother of the Brethren, with Mary, the mother of Yeshua, made haste to prepare the dinner. Before it could be served, however, there came a heavy knocking at the outer door. Jude went and returned.

"What is it?"

"A large party from Kedish and its neighborhood. They have collected all the maniacs and men demonized for miles around Kedish, brought them here, and pray you to cure them."

"Bring them in."

"But, Yeshua, our dinner!"

"Never mind, Jude"—this from James—"you left the door open. Here they come."

There were perhaps a hundred people in the Kedish party; the Jerusalem delegation of Scribes and Pharisees followed, and the general crowd surged in behind, so that the house was packed solid, and there was no room, no not so much as to eat. The Master made brief work of the demonized. Each was dragged before him, shrieking and struggling; and with a shorter, sharper

authority than ever before, he said to each, "Hush, and come out of him"; and, with a final struggle, the man became sane. The notable change in his manner struck the Jerusalem delegation.

"He speaks with authority," they said: "He speaks as master to slave. The master of demons is Baalzebub. Therefore, he casts them out by the power of Baalzebub."

The Master turned on them. This accusation, and the sight of cruelty, seem the two things which always made him angry. He blazed out at them—the maniacs being now cured—saying that the devil would not cast out devils nor do good deeds, that in attributing this work of God to Satan, they called evil good and good evil, and that, thereby, they committed the sin against the Holy Spirit of God. While he was yet speaking, there came another knocking at the street door. It proved to be Jairus, the ruler of the Capernaum Synagogue, with his elders. They asked that the Master come and cure the soldier-servant of the centurion commanding the Capernaum garrison, because the centurion, though a heathen, had built the local Synagogue and presented it to the congregation. The contrast of the request with the previous talk, its silent disagreement with the dreadful theory of the Jerusalem delegation, would have been farce-comedy if it had not been tragedy. It was far from lost on the crowd.

The Master rose and went out, thereby clearing the house, for all trooped after him. Jairus, with the rulers of the Synagogue, surrounded him; the Twelve mingled with them, and the Jerusalem delegation followed, explaining to all who would listen, that Jairus and the centurion were wrong. This centurion, by the way, was a Roman, loaned by the imperial government to Herod, Tetrarch, for training troops, placed by Herod in com-

mand of the new city building for his capital, and therefore, a man practically acting as Tribune, very much as British captains are sometimes loaned to reorganize the troops of native states in India, and temporarily serve there as majors or colonels.

Now, for a Jew to enter the house of a Gentile was, for the Jew, a serious matter. It "broke caste," made him unclean, involved a tedious, and somewhat expensive purification. As the centurion, having sent for the Master, sat by his comrade's bedside, and waited, he had time to think of all this, to revolve in his mind the stories he had heard of Yeshua Natzri, and to hit upon a way to save him this contamination and purification. He sent a messenger to stop him; and, being a practical man, he knew how often messengers make mistakes, and therefore followed, himself.

This seems to have been the first recorded meeting of the Master with a European. They saluted, and the centurion said:

"Master, I am not worthy that you should come under my roof; but say the word and my servant shall be healed; for I also am a man under discipline, and I say to one man, 'Go,' and he goeth, and to another, 'Come,' and he cometh, and to another, 'Do this,' and he doeth it."

The conversation had been in Greek. "Be it as thou wilt," said the Master, still in Greek. Then, in Aramaic, "So great faith have I not found in all Israel."

"Faith?" said Jude, aside, to Thomas, "Why, he is talking about military discipline!"

"Both mean, 'Obey.'"

"The centurion describes military discipline, Jude, but the Master calls it Faith."

"Can they be the same, Thomas?"

The Master and the centurion parted, having trans-

acted their business in few words, and those few above the comprehension of the crowd, so that they had been as private as if they had been alone. The centurion strolled back to his servant's bedside to find him, as he expected, out of danger.

"And now," said Jude to Thomas, with a hungry sigh; "And now we will go home and lock and bar the doors, and have some supper."

CHAPTER XVI

BATHSHEBA

HE Master, during his ministry, went once outside the Holy Land. After the first miracle of loaves and fishes, he abode on the borders of Phoenicia, where he cured the Syro-phoenician woman's daughter. He could not go to Jerusalem, because he would be killed; nor stay at home, because Herod wished to see him and would invite him to court; so he kept Passover just inside Jewish territory, where he could cross the frontier at once; and then he went north, up the coast through Phoenicia, to the border of Sidon, before he turned south-east across the mountains to the Dekapolis.

So much is a matter of record, and also that the Twelve went with him; but for the rest—silence. How long he took, what roads he followed, where he lodged in Tyre—these things were known to John and Levi-Matthew, but they did not write them. Tyre had declined since Alexander the Great built a causeway out to its unconquerable island, and sacked it, but still it was a name to conjure with. Few Christians know that Jesus of Nazareth, surrounded by the Twelve, once trod its half-deserted streets; or, at least, passed up the coast and looked down upon it from an hill-top. Triremes and Tyrian purple, Baal, and the priest of Ashtaroth, were at least as much part of his boyhood dreams as of ours; and he seems, in this one case, to

have allowed himself to look at what he dreamed of as a boy.

Somewhere in the Tyrian highland they rested. No man on foot can traverse Phoenicia in a day; and no man, even though he hurry from Tyre, and turn inland at the Sidonian border, can cross the sierra of the Libanon before nightfall. Jesus seems never to have hurried. We see him in some village, at the mouth of an obscure mountain pass, high upon the slope of the sierra, looking out over the fertile irrigated Phoenician plain, to watch the many-twinkled laughter of the western waves.

He was recognized, of course. There were not only heathen but Jews, and half-Jews, in all the border hamlets; and the villages of this whole mountain-slope had disgorged their sick and insane upon him during his work in Galilee. His dealings with the Syro-phoenician woman on the border, and the absence of any recorded cures, make it possible that he had healed no heathen outside the Holy Land, though certainly he cured Gentiles in the Dekapolis later. But that he had healed many, either Jews or heathen, from the neighborhood of Tyre and Sidon, who came to him in Galilee, is a matter of record.

Therefore they knew him. Someone whom he had helped, offered him food and a bed. Someone took care of the weary Twelve. Perhaps he cured the few sick of so small a place. More likely the Twelve, to get him chance to rest, passed word among the people that he did no cures outside of his own country. At any rate, it is so well within the range of probability as to be practically certain, that he sat, one late afternoon, in a Phoenician village, high on the slope below a mountain pass, and looked west oversea. The people knew him for the good physician of Nazareth, but dared not

disturb his meditations. The weary Twelve were resting also, scattered in cottages or waiting at a distance.

And so the inevitable happened. There is, of course, no record; but those who doubt need but reflect that, with human nature as it is, it must have happened somewhere, if not here. A little limping form crept through the bushes, a tiny sob aroused him and, detaching his deep gaze from the great sea, he sheathed his spirit in the flesh again and looked around. Close to him stood a tiny girl, clad in the one inevitable scanty garment of the East, and trembling at her own temerity. She held, in her outstretched hands, a broken doll. She had stolen near to him, evading the grave grown people, for she had read his face.

One long, long look between them, then—

"Oh, Rabboni, Bathsheba!"

"Bathsheba?"

"Yes, Rabboni. Cure her. Her arm is broken. She will die."

"Is this Bathsheba?"

"Oh, Yeshua Natzri, cure her! My father gave her. Now she will die too."

"Have you no word for yourself, little maid? You yourself are lame."

"Oh, Rabboni, Aunt Miriam said you must not be disturbed, but that you can cure anybody of anything. Bathsheba's arm is broken. See."

"Is there a carpenter in this village?"

"Yes, sir; Omri, the Hebrew."

"Hold tight to Bathsheba then, and let us go. Is this the shop? Hail, Omri."

"Jesus, thou son of David, hail."

"Omri, I have need of your glue-pot—I see it heating there—and a bit of string."

"Sir, all that I have is thine. Last year thou didst

heal mine only son. But is it fitting that the rightful king of Israel should mend small Miriam's broken doll? Let me."

"Nay, Omri. I also am a carpenter. 'Tis but a minute, when I have put Miriam down."

There was a pause, while Miriam watched, fascinated. Then: "There, little maid, run home, put Bathsheba carefully to bed upon a shelf, and by morning she will be well."

"Oh, thank you, sir. Thank you; but I cannot run."

"Try it and see."

A start, a cautious step, a gasp of joy, then, with a soft squeal of delight, the happy child danced from the door, and ran to tell her mother, while he, rested, perhaps amused and comforted, nodded kindly farewell to Omri, and turned back to pray, and watch the sunset on the western sea.

CHAPTER XVII

SANEMAN

OUR name?"

"No need. It is enough you see me."

"Cleon, the Greek, am I, and I love to deal with men whose names are known."

"A sane man of Gadara am I, who once was mad, and I plan to be unknown, when my task is done."

"Change name, then."

"Not so; for there is nothing false about him."

"About whom?"

"Jesus of Nazareth."

"Must you so closely follow him as that?"

"Friend Cleon, I must so closely follow him that utterly his spirit dwelleth in me, else am I all undone and mad again."

"I do not understand."

"No matter; you have sought me out. What would you?"

"Saneman of Gadara, I am a physician of Antioch, not unknown, and being in Gamalia and hearing of your cure, I sought you out to learn of it more fully."

"Why, I was demonized and now am free."

"Of course, of course. How came you demonized, how long, and why? What know you of it? How did it feel? I do not often meet those who can tell."

"By what right, question you?"

"By right of human suffering. I may learn from you some fact to help me to help others."

"The right is sound. Know, then, Cleon, that, to my shame, the thing that gripped me was an unclean devil. My mind dwelt on lustful things—first by mine own will, then by no will of mine. Then I remember nothing. I cannot tell you how it felt, because for seven years I had no feeling. It is a blank. I waked to find myself at the Master's feet, naked, on a lake shore, with a vast herd of swine pouring down-hill past us into the lake."

"Yea, I heard of those swine. The devils out of you went into them."

"So the swineherds say. Myself, I see no need. Hundreds were cured, across the lake, and not one bullock lost, nor sheep, nor even goat, nor dog. So I preach cure to all the wretched hereabout, saying it can be done and cost no swine; and, bit by bit, they begin to believe me. When next the Master comes across the lake, many will come to him; and, oh, I pray that he come soon. There are so many and they need him so."

"What does he do?"

"He looks each in the eye and they shake and quail."

"Why?"

"Out of his eyes flows, as it were, fire; kind fire."

"But why, why, why?"

"I do not know: and yet, in part, I do; for I remember, though dimly, how it was done with me. That which was not I in me was reckless, brutal, turbulent. It was roused, then beaten out. That which is I myself was cowering far back in a corner. It was brought forward—oh, so ashamed, and so relieved, and free. What brought it forward was a sureness, which flowed from him, that God is our great Father, good and kind,

and does not will that any be destroyed. If I had only known it from the first I could not so have sinned. Knowing it now, I have found pardon—pardon and clean, sharp strength."

"If, then, I can, by any means, rouse hope in the gods in any darkened brain—"

"What God is there to hope in, saving One? The gods of the Greeks, the gods of Syria, are patrons of all evil, fables, deified lusts of men. If they exist at all, then they are devils. No brain so darkened but it senses that."

"He of the Hebrews, then—"

"How shall a darkened brain attain to Him whom all the wisest of the world among the heathen have not known. No. You have one resource and but one. If you can rouse hope of any darkened brain in Jesus of Nazareth, why then—ah, then—"

"I see, I see, I see. In the name of Jesus of Nazareth—"

"You have it. Hope in him leads men to God, and casts out devils."

"Is there no other way?"

"None other. You know the gods of Egypt and of Hind. You know the Druids and their wicked cages of human sacrifice. You know the devils that the black men worship. Where, among all, is any hope for any darkened mind? They have no sense of sin, and so no pledge of pardon. Only in Jesus, Jesus and his Father, is there full knowledge of all sinfulness and, with the knowledge, full forgiveness. At best, the others claim to keep men safe. None other saves the lost."

"Saneman, almost thou persuadest me—"

"Persuaded thou art already, and not by me, but by the very truth fo God. Lo, 'tis most obvious. 'Tis plain common sense. Try it on the next clouded brains

you meet, and see how deep it stirs them."

"Try it yourself."

"I dare not. I have been a house for devils."

"Come with me, then. There are maniacs in the hill-caves outside of every town. Find me one."

"That is most sadly easy. Turn down this side street to the left. Follow this small ravine. Here dwells one who is almost harmless. If you fear, remember that, though sane, I once was mad and still have a madman's thews and sinews. Nay, look not doubtfully upon me. I am so based and grounded in the love of God through Jesus, nothing can touch me now."

"Call out this madman."

"Jochabed, Jochabed, Jochabed, come hither."

"Do you know him?"

"I take pains to know all such, against the time when He shall come and heal them."

"Who calls me, Jochabed?"

"'Tis a mad voice, Saneman."

"Fear nothing, Cleon. Jochabed, come out. Quit that crawling. Stand upright, like a man. Take those grass-stems out of your hair. Talk to him, Cleon."

"Jochabed, how long have you been mad?"

"What's that to you?"

"Nothing; but, to you, everything."

"Who are you?"

"One who trusts God and Jesus of Nazareth."

"Jesus I know and Legion, here, I once knew, but who are you?"

"Nay, rather, who are you?"

"You have not stood at the eternal gates and watched the Sons of God go out and in. You would not know my name, were I to tell you. Go away."

"Nay, rather, go you from this poor tenement you have infested."

"Why, slave?"

"A free Greek, I, of Antioch, and no slave, though a physician. What's more important, a free man of the universe, a servant of the Living God, who does not plan that you or yours should darken any one."

"He plans very badly, then."

"Not so. As a physician I know that some blow, some illness, some great anguish, saps man's defenses, and gives you gateway to the soul's citadel; but 'tis not the wish of the Living God."

"The Living God, He is too high for me, and for you also. Therefore, cease living, and go seek Him."

"Halt. Steady, Saneman, I do not need defense. This poor thing cannot shake my steadfast soul, that rests on our Great Father. As for you, there, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, who loves God, hush and come out of him. Catch him quick, Saneman. He grovels, foaming. Is he cured?"

"The spasm passes. Let him answer for himself."

"Cured? No. You are not close enough to God, physician. I hold this tenement, this resting-place, this caravanserai, this poor thing you call Jochabed, securely still. Now put your tail between your legs and droop your ears and slink away, lest I grow angry. I go to my cave, to sleep, for you do not know Jesus."

"Jochabed, Jochabed, come back. He crawls off, Saneman. The treatment failed."

"Yet almost it succeeded. His grasp was shaken."

"Now I shall go across the lake and seek out Jesus, and watch him cure the demonized. It can be done. I see it can be done. The method is right, only I have not yet the power. Will you come with me?"

"No. He has laid upon me to stay here and tell, in all the cities and their villages, the great things God hath done for me. If you should learn to cast out

devils, look to it that you join the Twelve or else they may forbid you. Jews are jealous."

"I trust in one God, Father of us all; but I cannot join the Twelve. He has not asked me. I cannot even join the disciples, for they would not have me. I am a Gentile, not a Jew. I cannot follow with them."

"True, true. Yet what you did shows that you can learn more. God give you grace to cast out devils in the name of Jesus, brother Cleon."

"You call me 'Brother'? Why?"

"Because we both believe God is our Father, and all believing men are Sons of God. Tell the Master, if you can, that my whole soul longs to be with him, but I am here obeying orders and that I carry out his word. Would God I might go with you now and see him."

"Nay, better to obey and serve him here, until he come to you. God bless you, brother Saneman; we shall meet again, I think—before a throne."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE LITTLE LAME BOY

HAKE the dust off your feet against the village, John!"

"Wait, James; not yet. Why did Yeshua name us James and John Lightning?"

"Because we act all in a flash, of course."

"There was affection and amusement in the nickname. Was there no warning?"

"Oh, well; content, John, then, content. What would you do?"

"There was a face there at a window of that last house; a weary child's face."

"Children's faces are not weary."

"This was. How can we enter?"

"Go to the door and knock, of course. The frank way is always the best way. Yeshua's messengers must do nothing secret."

"It looks deserted, James."

"So much the better. If all the grown folk are in the village, no one can cast us out. Hullo, within there, little son! Where are you?"

"Hippety hop, hippety hop. Hear that little crutch."

"The child is lame, John, and the house has a stone floor."

"So have the hearts of those who own it. Listen."

"Who are you, sirs?"

"Yeshua's men—Yeshua of Nazareth—come to cure you."

"The prophet of Nazareth, who loves little children? Oh, I have heard of him; but, sirs, the door is locked."

"Come to the window, then. How old are you?"

"Seven; but Martha says I am no larger than a child of five."

"Why does she lock you in?"

"She don't. I locked myself by accident, letting the latch fall. Therefore I cannot play under the fig-tree."

"This Martha, John, is not so cruel as you thought!"

"Perhaps so, James. Little son, will not the latch lift if you stand on a stool?"

"No; it is stuck. But it will lift if you push the door towards me. I am not strong enough to pull it. There, 'tis done. Enter."

(A very small boy, with a lame leg, and a crutch tucked under one arm, stands balanced on one foot in the doorway, trying to bow and do the honors. The house is a one-room, mud hut, bare of furniture except a clay divan at one end, with some tattered rugs on it. There is a charcoal furnace and a water-jar. Nothing else.)

"The boy is chubby, John. Martha does not stint him."

"Martha? Oh, Martha is a darling!"

"Is she your mother?"

"No, my aunt. Mother and father died in the great sickness, five years ago. She nursed them and me."

"I think, John, your deduction concerning floors and hearts was hasty. What is your name, little son?"

"David; after the shepherd king, who was so strong a warrior."

"Well, David, this is James, and I am John. What has become of your Aunt Martha?"

"She is gleaning. She plucks olives, picks grapes for the vintage, dries figs, and works in many ways. Summer is nice. The hard time is the winter."

"And what of you, David?"

"Oh, I plait grass into mats, and I know how to weave baskets, such as you both wear at your side for haversacks."

"Do you not long to run and play?"

"Of course; but Martha says it must be God's will that I cannot. The sickness left me so."

"I doubt if it be God's will, David. I doubt if any little child be sick or lame according to God's will; and the proof is that we have come to cure you."

"Oh, please sirs, how?"

"Is there any oil in the house?"

"No, sir. We ate it all upon our bread."

"Look if there be a little, even a drop or two, in the bottom of the jar. Yes, that will do. Pour it into my hand. Now pick him up, James, crutch and all, and let us all go out under the fig tree and kneel down and pray.

"O Lord, my God, dear Father of us all, loose this thy little son whom Satan has bound these many years, O Lord, hear! O God, save! O Father, help!

"Now, David, I mark the oil upon your forehead, palms, and feet, and the lame leg. Kneel, and ask God to make you well and strong."

"O Heavenly Father, Martha says Yeshua Bardawid has cured so many little children. He would have cured me if he had ever come here, but she could not take me, because he moved from place to place so quickly, and has so many people round him that little lame boys cannot get to him. I think he must have thought of that because here are James and John. Please let them cure me."

"Your hands upon his head, James, covering mine. Now, pray as never we have prayed before. Now, little son, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and walk."

"Oh, John, James, is it real?"

"Catch him, John, or he falls. Stick the crutch up in the fig tree out of the way. Now, let him walk to me, then back to you. Teach him to step out boldly. Now, David, take my hand and let us run to the corner of the house and back. There, boldly done. When you grow older, you shall outrun King David. Now, by yourself and back. Now, jump. Again. Let's see how far you can jump."

"Oh, there comes Martha!"

"Then run and meet her."

"Not so, John. I have a better plan. Let us hide behind the wall and, David, you pretend nothing has happened, and then show her. Quick, John."

"David! Oh, David!"

"What is it, Martha dear?"

"Are you safe? The children said two strangers came this way. They tried to make a speech in the village and the rabbi said they were dangerous, and ordered them out. It looked as if they turned in here."

"Yes, Martha, they did turn in here. They are James and John, Yeshua Bardawid's men."

"Why do you sit so still? Where is your crutch? Did they steal it?"

"They cured me, Martha. Oh, I can't wait. See! Oh, James, John, help! Martha has fallen down."

"Don't be afraid. A little water will make her wake up; but now we must go quickly, John, or we cannot go at all."

"Go? If you do, who will cure little Miriam Bath Saul? And lame-backed Jonas? And Mary Neri's

baby who is sick? Oh, don't go that way. Go back to the village. I mustn't leave Martha, or I would take your hands and pull you."

"Then, David, we will wait a little, and you and Martha shall go with us to cure the other little children. What say you, James?"

"Content, John."

"James?"

"Yes, John."

"Don't you think your deduction about wiping off the dust of your feet against this village, that it might be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah at Judgment than for these, was just a little hasty?"

"Oh, peace, John Lightning."

CHAPTER XIX

TOUCHING THE LEPER

"JUDE, Jude, the Master surnamed you Lebbaeus, 'jolly,' and me 'the less,' meaning in age, as well you know. Is it then fair to Him or me, even through you are jolly, to jest of me to all as 'Little Jim?'"

The speaker, a magnificent figure of a man, drew himself up to his full height, and squared his shoulders; then he laid one massive hand on Jude's arm. Jude was a red Jew, short, blonde, and plump, with an engaging smile. He surveyed James Baralphaeus shrewdly, and so long that an answering smile stole to James' lips.

"Nay, little Jim, it is not fair; and yet you solemn princes in Israel have utterly misjudged my Yeshua. He does not laugh, for sadness of this sinful world; but he smiles often. He loves little children—a thing you are too dignified to do. He has more keenness of wit in his little finger than you in your whole lumbering body; and he sees the sad, absurd, heartbreaking, and most lovable humor of this world, as you eleven cannot. Why, man, I catch a twinkle in his eye a dozen times a day; we share the jest together over your heads and love each other for it, even when our hearts are breaking. I am not great or wise or able, like the rest of you. He knows me well enough—why choose me one of the twelve unless there is in him something that answers

to the hearty joy of life. I tell you that you much misjudge our Yeshua."

"Well, well, let it be so, brother. Perhaps you are right; but in the next village do not speak of me as 'Little Jim,'"

"Content, if it so please you. I will wait till village after next. Are we to turn, or keep straight on?"

"I do not know. Try turning by the cliff."

"Unclean! Unclean!"

"What have we here, James?"

"A leper. Friend, what do you here so far from any village?"

"Who calls a leper, 'friend'?"

"I do. James Baralphaeus, one of Christ's men."

"O, God of Israel, praise. I have so often heard of him. Is he coming?"

"No need. He hath sent us, to preach the good news, cure the sick, give sight to blind, cast out demons, raise the dead, and cleanse all lepers."

"Did he say lepers?"

"He did, most clearly."

"Have you healed any since he sent you out?"

"You are the first. We hear the others have cleansed many."

"The others? How mean you?"

"Yeshua sent out six pair of us, two and two. Meanwhile, he goes himself to our home cities."

"Oh, sirs, will you heal me?"

"Have you faith?"

"Since Yeshua Bardawid sent you, I know that you can heal me if you will. I was a rich man once. Perhaps there are some fragments of my fortune left. I—"

"Thy money perish with thee."

"Oh, sirs, not that, not that. What shall I do?"

"Do? Why, repent you of your sins, and pray God's

pardon. Would you have dared to offer money to Yeshua Bardawid?"

"No."

"Then be ashamed to offer it to us. We might almost be excused, were we not to cure you."

"You said he said, 'all lepers'."

"True. Therefore we must forgive. Your name?"

"I was once Bar Eli; Abdar bar Eli."

"A son of Israel?"

"Yea."

"Then Abdar bar Eli, son of Israel, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, be thou clean. Go show thyself to the priest, and say of thy cleansing as little publicly as possible."

"Why that injunction, James?"

"Yeshua gave it!"

"Abdar bar Eli?"

"Oh, Israel's God be good to you."

"Are you cured?"

"Why, yes; that is, I think so."

"Do you not know within yourself?"

"Nay, truly. I feel no different. Yet I must be cured. So many have been."

"Strip off the bandages that we may see some part of your flesh. How is it, James?"

"Ugh! No change, Jude. No cure."

"Why?"

"What said Yeshua?"

"Pray, lay on hands, anoint with oil. We have but prayed."

"We have no oil."

"Then lay on hands."

"Back, Jude. Why, lad, he who touches lepers grows a leper."

"Did Yeshua?"

"No. But cured him. What if you fail to cure?"

"Then am I leper like to this; but Yeshua gave us power. Stand aside, James. I am of small account in the Brotherhood. You are my elder brother and, after Yeshua, head of our house; but in this matter I obey Yeshua, not you. Unless we try, this Thing dies hopeless. Look at it grovel."

"Oh, mercy, mercy, mercy."

"Abdar bar Eli, leper, on your head I lay my hand. Ugh! In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, be thou clean. What happens, James?"

"Nothing. He is not cured."

"Perhaps the thing takes time."

"With Jeshua it did not."

"Then am I—Oh, it cannot be. Take your hand off my shoulder, James. Stand back. Touch me not. Unclean, unclean."

"Nay, Jude, pray you. Pray both of us. Pray greatly. Then I try."

"Oh, James, not so. You are, after Yeshua, head of the house and King of Israel. I was of small account, but you—you must not risk it. Go rather, and fetch Yeshua."

"If, after Yeshua, I am head of the house and king, take you my orders. Lay your hands upon his head; both hands, on top of mine. O, God of Israel, we trusted in Thee and obeyed Yeshua. Leave us not in this disaster. Cleanse this leper and us. Abdar bar Eli, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, be thou clean."

"James?"

"Hush—wait—pray, Jude, pray. What is it, Abdar?"

"Something—I know not what—I am dizzy. It leaps and tingles in my veins. Let me lie down in the dust, and give God thanks."

"For what? For what?"

"That He hath cleansed me."

"Nay, come and wash, like Naaman. Here is an irrigation channel. James, his flesh is pink, like baby's flesh, where the water touches. Abdar bar Eli, go to the Temple and show yourself to the priest. Why could I not cleanse him, James?"

"Jude, it takes two, I think."

"One of whom is willing to become a leper to save his brother. Never again shall I jest of you, Little Jim."

CHAPTER XX

THE MAN PARALYZED

HO are you, sirs, and why in my poor house?"

"I brought them, Grandfather. They cured men in the market-place. Their eyes are kind. The big man, when he heard of you, said they would cure you, too."

"Alas, child, none can do that—or only one. If I could drag myself to Yeshua Bardawid—"

"We come from him. This is James, son of Alphaeus, and I am his brother Jude. You may have heard the names, for both of us are disciples of the Master, and his cousins."

"Yea, I have heard that you are princes in Israel. Your pardon that I cannot rise to great you."

"Then rise!"

"But, sirs, I cannot."

"If you had known us not, or had not known our lineage, and had taken us for peasants, as we seem, pardon were yours. If you had never heard of Yeshua Natzri, or hearing, you had not believed his power, pardon were yours. But you know who we are, and what is due us; you know that we are sent by Yeshua for cure. Therefore, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and greet us!"

"Sirs—you are unreasonable—I cannot—O, God of Israel, what's this?"

"Catch him, Jude, ere he fall forward."

"I walk! I stand! I walk!"

"Then leap in the air."

"Oh, Princes, Princes, Princes!"

"Nay, thank God, and after Him, Yeshua Natzri. 'Tis by the power of God, through Him, we cure, not by ourselves. Now sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you."

"What mean you, sirs?"

"We mean, 'Lift up your heart.' You had grown forgetful that God loves you."

"Whom? Me?"

"Yes, you. Sin thus no more."

"What? God loves me?"

"Why, slow of heart, if any babe were given you at birth, and brought up in the room with you, the women tending it, but you knowing all; if, as a child, it slept in the hollow of your arm, waked in the night to grope your hand for sense of safety, and cried out for you; if you trained it, taught it to walk and talk, guided its toddling steps, knew its every thought, are you so tiger-hearted that you would not care? Tigers themselves would love it—and so would you—and so does God."

"We forfeit such love later."

"And you, a man with children! Punish we must, at times, but never cease to love. No more does He."

"He punished."

"I doubt it. I greatly doubt if God send any sickness, but rather hates it, as He hates lying, lewdness, and idolatry. However, your punishment, if it were punishment, is over. Underneath are the everlasting arms. Rest you secure now in the love of God."

"But—but—this is a greater thing than cure. Why, if God love me, then must I live in love of Him and all the world turns golden; for He will give me what is

best for me and take me home at last to—to live with Him."

"And you, a man with grandchildren, and not know that till now! Why, this small mannikin, who brought us, thinks better of you than you have done of God. Learn you from him. When you can think of God as this big-eyed boy thinks of you, then come to Yeshua Natzri and learn more. In the mean time, farewell."

"Nay, sirs, your fee, your fee. Leave me not. What if the thing return?"

"Here is your small physician. Return it will not, if you learn of him. As for the fee, 'tis everything you own and all you are, laid at the feet of God, then taken up again to use for Him. Be you a father to all around you, as He is father to you. And now farewell, until we meet again."

"Oh where, sirs, where?"

"Before our Father's throne."

CHAPTER XXI

THE MADMAN

IRS, be persuaded. Leave us not."

"Why stay? Our message is given, and all your sick are cured. 'Twas possible, because you have had greater faith than most. Now fare ye well."

"But how of others that fall ill?"

"Cure them yourselves. Fast, pray, and lay on hands. Or, if that be too much for your new-budding faith, bring them to Yeshua."

"Nay, one more thing."

"What is it?"

"Go not that way."

"What, is not this the shortest path to Gersa?"

"Shortest in steps, perhaps, but all eternity in time."

"How mean you?"

"Under the limestone cliff, midway between the villages, there is a tomb. Within the tomb, a demon."

"Mean you one demonized?"

"Oh, yes, the thing has flesh and spirit. It prowls and prowls. It lives on sheep and goats—their bones are in the cave—and men's bones also."

"Meaning?"

"Meaning all horror."

"Slay then."

"Smitten of God—afflicted—we dare not slay the demonized."

"What think you, Andrew?"

"A madman. As for the rest, a village tale with which old wives frighten children. Shall we turn back, Captain Peter?"

"I never turned back yet on Yeshua's business, and have scant stomach for it now. Ho, you of Bathabara, guide us."

"Sirs, we dare not."

"Then follow, follow and call. So shall you guide, and yet, his coming fall on us! Then flee, or watch the outcome from afar. Where is your faith, ye fainthearted of Israel?"

"We follow and pray. Pray ye also, and greatly, good fishermen."

"Peter! Andrew!"

"What is it, friends?"

"We come very close. There it is, to the right, by the side of the path, in the bushes."

"Draw ye back then. Ho, dweller in the tombs, where are you?"

"Who calls me?"

"Those who have right. Come here."

"I come, I come. Then we will see who has the right. Who calls me?"

"Yeshua Natzri's men."

"Yeshua Natzri I know, but who are you?"

"Simon and Andrew, men of his. Stop that crawling. Come out of the bushes. Drop that club. Who is this poor tenement of clay you have infested?"

"His name was Simon also. Mine is—"

"What's that to me. Yeshua knows you all, but we do not. How long have you been in him?"

"Ten years in all, and five of them with power."

"Then, leave him."

"Who are you that I should—"

"Yeshua's men, I tell you! Look, and see that we tell truth, and have his power behind us. In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, hush and come out of him."

"Arrrragh!"

"Come forward now, good villagers, and pick him up. When he awakens, he will be sane. Nay, be bolder. He wakens now."

"Where am I?"

"With friends, Simon. Rest. You have been ill."

"Your names?"

"I, Simon also; this, my brother Andrew."

"I seem to myself strong and well."

"The illness was of spirit, not of body."

"I have had dreams. It was not?—oh, say it was not?—Did you cure me?"

"In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, we cast it out."

"O God, be merciful to me, a sinner! Who is this Jesus of Nazareth? Why am I naked? What shall keep the evil from returning?"

"Ye who are cured, give us, as fee, garments for this poor soul. Let some one run and fetch them. Simon, sane man, go to the nearest irrigation ditch, and wash. Thank God, and come again. We await you here. Follow, one of you, and see that he comes. Andrew, what keeps the evil from returning?"

"Yeshua says that when the evil spirit is cast out, he wanders through dry places seeking rest; and finding none, he says I will return unto my home whence I came out; and, coming, he finds it empty, swept and garnished. Then he takes to him seven other evil spirits, worse than himself, and they enter in and dwell there and the last state of that man is worse than the first, unless—"

"Unless?"

"Unless when he return, he find the house not empty."

"Who shall fill it?"

"God."

"How shall God enter?"

"I think through Yeshua. At least, for the time being, to perfect the cure, 'twere better Yeshua saw him. Here he comes back again. Thanks, Jonas. Hail, Simon, sane man."

"Jonas tells me I have been mad five years, Simon Stone."

"Nay, ten. No matter. You have all eternity to be sane in."

"What if the Thing come back?"

"Again, no matter. Let it find you at the feet of Yeshua Natzri, our Master, and it can touch you not."

"Is that the law? But what if he be gone?"

"Those who worship God and serve man for God's sake, are close to Yeshua Natzri though all the world stretch between. Here come the clothes. Thanks, Barsabas. Put them on, Simon, and come with us."

"Where?"

"To serve others; to make the blind to see, and the deaf to speak, and the lame to walk. To free others demonized, to cleanse lepers, perhaps to raise the dead. And then, at last, to—"

"To Jesus."

CHAPTER XXII

THE LAME MAN AND ANDREW

EY, old hippety-hop. Dot and carry one, how goes it?"

"Shame on you, sons of Israel, to jest a lame man. He too is of Jacob."

"Sirs, if you dare interfere to save an old man from the jeers of young ones, you are kinder than most—and braver."

"The boys mean no harm; they merely fail to understand. Is it not so, boys?"

"Is what so, sir?"

"I said you meant no harm, but only jested, and did not know that jokes to a lame man upon his lameness, hurt like raw flesh under the whiplash."

"Is it as bad as that? We did not mean to. He walks so funny, and we like to see him shake his fist at us."

"What lamed you, Barjacob?"

"Herod the Great, accursed be his name; and yet, I should not blame him. He did not know, nor mean it. I have heard that you preach forgiveness under penalty of no cure. I would be cured; and it is sober truth that Herod did not mean it."

"Can you then forgive him?"

"I hurt a man once, slinging at a wolf a stone that glanced. It was no fault of mine. The man bore grudge against me."

"Was he wrong?"

"Of course. Yes, I forgive Herod."

"And these wild boys, who know no better?"

"Yes, though it be hard; but I was once a careless boy myself."

"What is the matter with you?"

"A devil dwells in my joints—a lurking, jeering devil, that twists me o' cold nights. See how my knees are swollen."

"A gloomy devil that makes black your mind, eh, Barjacob?

"How knew you?" The gloom is worse than the pain."

"Well, well; a hard case to bear, yet easy to cure. 'Tis not a devil but a sickness, Barjacob; at least, I think so; though it may be that behind most sickness lies power of a devil. Yet not all sick are demonized. Have you faith?"

"What mean you?"

"Believe you we can cure you?"

"Certainly; if you will."

"Then kneel—I know 'tis hard—ease yourself down. Hold by the wall. Now pray to God for mercy, confessing to Him your sins."

"They are too many."

"Then the worst ones."

"Silently, or aloud?"

"In silence. Who are we, to come between you and God? Try out your life by rule of God's commandments, and tell Him where you fail."

"Give me a moment's silence. Now, 'tis done."

"Now, are you willing, Barjacob, to promise that, where your sins have injured others, you will repair the damage, so far as lieth in your power?"

"Yea, He helping me; though almost I had rather have the pain. 'Tis a large price to pay for health."

"But cheap for salvation. What shall it profit a man, saith Yeshua, if he keep the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

"So be it."

"Have you, Barjacob, among other things, had insight to confess the breaking of the second commandment, against idolatry?"

"Why, nonsense, man. I never worshipped idols in my life."

"'Tis not against idols only but anything, and worship is acknowledgment of worth. Have you acknowledged ever anything as worth more to you, for the time being, than your God?"

"Acknowledged? No. What mean you?"

"Acknowledged, by your life. Have you so lived, at any time, as to show that something, or someone else seemed worth more to you than God?"

"Who gave you such a thought of the second law?"

"Yeshua did."

"If he be right, then is my life one long idolatry."

"Confess, repent, forsake, then, and reform."

"But oh, if Yeshua be right, then can I live at peace with God; for it is simple truth that nothing is worth while compared with Him. I know, have always known it, from a tiny child at my old mother's knee. Behind and underneath forgetfulness I know the thing is true. Why, thank you, Princes! I will return unto my God whom I had forgotten. I will arise and seek Jehovah's face. Oh Lord, my God! I prized my strength above you and am crippled. I prized my youth above you and am old; my place and am cast out; my king and am forsaken; my wealth and am penniless; my wife and she is dead; my children and outlive them. I am a very feeble, foolish, weak, old man, but oh my Lord, my God, I can remember Thee. Then shall it matter nothing

what here becomes of me. Remembering Thee, I shall go down to death like one in beggar rags, who hides a mighty jewel in his bosom and comes unto a king. My wife remembered God and serves Him now. My little children stand and praise before Him. Stupid, dull, blind, I had forgotten. Forgive me, God, who had forgotten Thee."

"Peter, he has forgotten us also. He has risen, and stands square upon his feet, and straight, like a young man. I think he needs no cure."

"Orders are orders, Andrew. Barjacob, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, be thou cured. Remain so. Has it struck you that you are well and the pains gone, man?"

"Why so—why so I am. Thank you, young sirs. But, by the side of what you have done for me, cure of the body is as nothing."

"Yet is the body exceedingly convenient to earn a morsel of bread to eat, and another to give away. Know, too, that we of ourselves have done nothing for you. It is the power of God through Jesus of Nazareth which has cured your soul and healed your body and satisfied your empty heart, homesick for God, our Father."

"For—for whom?"

"For God, our Father. Know you not the good news, so very old 'tis new again, which Yeshua teaches, as David did, and Moses, and the Prophets, that we are Sons of God, for God is our Father?"

"I do not understand. God is our King; a good king, kind and loving."

"Who made you?"

"My father begat me."

"Who made a world, where fathers beget sons?"

"Why, God did."

"Who made you then?"

"Why, in a sense, God did."

"Was it as carpenters make tables, or putting something of His nature into you, as sons resemble fathers?"

"Not—not as a carpenter makes a table—of course not—what saith the Scripture?—made in the image of God—but wait! The whole world rocks and reels with such a thought. Mean you—mean you that there is that divine in me of which God is the father?"

" 'Tis the old secret, sung by David, preached by the prophets, known even to Adam, forgotten by his sons, revealed again by Jesus of Nazareth."

"What, I? — old? — crippled? — worn? — poor?— humble?"

"Old?—you have just begun eternity. Crippled? You're straight and healed.—Worn? Your heart has found eternal youth at last. Poor?—Your father owns the universe and will give you what you need.— Humble? All men are God's little children, serving Him or wandering in the dark, in either case as good as you and to be treated brotherly; but you as good as they, being a Son of God."

"Leave me not, princes. Brothers, turn not to go."

"Nay; seek your weaker brethren. Help and tend, that they may listen. Then, teach. When you have taught, come and learn more."

"Of whom?"

"Of Jesus."

"Where?"

"Wherever he may be. Ask, seek, and find."

CHAPTER XXIII

THE TOMBS OF THE DEMONIZED

AIL Peter."

"Nay, woe, Philip. Israel is undone. John Baptist is dead."

"Nathaniel and I heard, under shadow of Mount Carmel."

"And Andrew and I, on the borders of Phoenicia."

"And John and I, at Baneas. Has God yet smitten Herod?"

"No, nor will not, at least not yet. His cup is not yet full."

"What mean you?"

"No more than instinct; yet, I know we have not done with Herod."

"Where is Yeshua?"

"Capernaum, most likely. He went to our home cities. Now we must haste to him, for he will need us. All Israel heaves and mutters. Never was such a day, to make him king and slay the Romans."

"Not slay, Simon. He shall rule them."

"Well, well, he will decide. We guessed your coming, Philip; but had no thought to find John and James with you."

"But we guessed yours, Andrew, and so came. Now for Capernaum quickly. What is shortest way?"

"Here, past the crags and through that little valley."

"The valley of the empty tombs? Not so. The demonized of Sephet herd and kennel there."

"What of it?"

"Why, if we cure them we shall be delayed. If not, we shall be dead."

"I never yet turned back on Yeshua's business. Now, when we are to make him king, is no time to begin."

"Lead then; we follow."

"Halt, there! Unclean! Unclean!"

"What do you lepers with the demonized?"

"They dare not touch us. Besides it would not matter if they did. Whence come you, that ye know not this end of the ravine of Sheol is for lepers?"

"Name you this passage Sheol?"

"Yea, truly. All here were better dead."

"I'm not so sure of that. Some can be cured. Why went ye not to Jesus of Nazareth?"

"There were so many. We are too far gone. We did not believe."

"Did not, or do not?"

"Do—no, did not. One from among us went to him, was cured, went to the priests at the Temple, then came back to talk to us. Cured he was, most surely."

"Where is he now?"

"In the nearest village, and strives to have us go to Jesus. Perhaps we would, but know not where to find him."

"Have you then faith?"

"We had not then, but now we have."

"Then be clean."

"What mean you?"

"Kneel, and be clean!"

"Why?—what?—"

"We are Yeshua Bardawid's men, Yeshua Natzri's

men, apostles of Jesus of Nazareth, in haste to go to him, but under orders to clean up, as we go."

"O, God of Israel, what's this?"

"What is it, Gamiel?"

"The power of God is on me, my flesh tingles. Kneel all of you, kneel and be clean."

"Nothing happens to me."

"Peter, these lepers have less faith than most. We must lay hands on them."

"So be it, Andrew. Kneel, ye friends of folly. Shall this great power of God come to your very tomb-doors and you refuse it? Gamiel, you are healed already, and need nothing. As for the rest, we lay our hands upon you, so, and so, and so. O God of Israel, hold not their sins against them, but in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, cleanse these Thy poor, foolish children. Go, show yourselves to the priests, and make as little public mention of your cure as may be."

"O God of Israel, praise! My flesh creeps and tingles!"

"And mine!"

"And mine!"

"All's well, then. Go, get you gone, and cry 'unclean' no more."

"Then, who shall guard you through the valley? For if we cry 'unclean,' the demonized shrink back; if not, they slay."

"Will you, just healed by God's great power, walk, even for kindly cause, with a lie in your lips? Be not afraid for us. God guards us through the valley. Follow and see. How many of them are there?"

"A dozen, perhaps; all slayers. The milder ones have fled—or disappeared. 'Tis hard to tell their number, for at night they change and wander."

"Put hands to mouth in trumpet-wise, John Zebedee—your voice is clearest—and call them."

"Content, Peter. Ahoy, ahoy. Ho, all ye demons of this earthly Sheol, come out, come out and show yourselves."

"Who calls us from our tombs?"

"Come out, come out, come all, here is one needs slaying!"

"Ha—ha—ha—ha!"

"Peter, I do not wonder that they call this Sheol. Halt, you there on the left. Stand up. Now, in the name of Yeshua Natzri, come hither."

"Yeshua Natzri we know, but who are you?"

"His men. Look well at us, and see. Keep the rest in play, Peter, while I meet this one. Stand still. Look me between the eyes, that you may see I have his power. Now, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, come out of him."

"Ho, ho! You have not strength enough."

"Who ever dreamed I had? Not I. But He has strength enough. Hush, and come out. Come here, you shaggy creature on the left. Lord God of Israel, we cannot cleanse them all. They scatter. Send them back to us. That is better. Draw you together with him there, you three. Now, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, come out of them. How goes it Peter, Andrew, Philip, with yours?"

"All cast out, John. When the devils cease to tear them, they will awaken sane."

"Well done. Let us go on."

"Not so, not so. There may be poor souls, still demonized and hidden in the tombs, to come out when we leave, and kill these cured and helpless. Besides, unless we safeguard the souls of these cured as well as their bodies, the devils will return and cause relapse.

Did not Yeshua say that after a time the devils always return and, if they find their house empty, reënter?"

"What would you?"

"Search the tombs."

"Did you not pray aloud to God to gather them together, and see Him grant it?"

"True, Philip; but I meant and thought of only those in sight."

"Then, take you the tombs on the right hand. We the left. Will you stay, James, and guard these?"

"Yea, truly. They awaken. Ho, friend, what is it?"

"Where am I?"

"In the valley called 'Sheol' near Sephet in Galilee. I am James Barzebedee. Who are you?"

"Simon, surnamed the Strong, of Caesarea. How came I here?"

"I do not know. We found you. You were ill. We cured you."

"Who are these, who waken round us like wounded from some battle?"

"Men cured like you."

"A rocky pass—caves and tombs—I am naked—hair-matted—filthy. Barzebedee, my soul shakes. Name the illness."

"Know you, then, nothing?"

"Nothing since Caesarea."

"We cast a devil out of you."

"What keeps him from returning?"

"Power of God, through Yeshua Bardawid."

"I know him not."

"We know him. That is enough. We are his men. Help me to gather these poor folk together, and then talk further. Ho, friends, come here. Come forward now you clean men who were lepers. Take in your care

these sane men who were demonized. You all need food and clothes. Have any here a friend who will believe the power God has shown upon you?"

"We know of none."

"Then go to the cleansed leper in the nearby village who has seen Yeshua. He will help you. Say that a Christman sent you."

"Let us wait here till dark since we have no clothing."

"Of course. When you are fed and clothed, go you cleansed to the priests and make as little public mention of your cures as may be. As for you, sane men, after a time, says Yeshua, the demon will return. If he find you dwelling in your own strength, he will reënter and your last state shall be worse than the first. But if he find God dwelling in your hearts, then ye are safe. When fed and clad seek out, therefore, Yeshua Natzri, and learn from him how to draw near to God. Here come the rest. Ho, Peter, found you others?"

"None."

"Where is John then?"

"Oh, he found one and went after him, into a cave."

"And you not with him?"

"No need. God was with him. He awaits the cured man's wakening now, within."

"How know you?"

"How else? There he comes now, bringing his cured man with him. Let us hasten."

"Content. He can catch up with us. Come, John, these here know what to do and will take care of your cured man. Hurry to Yeshua."

"Oh, sirs, God bless, God keep you!"

"And on you, in the name of Yeshua Natzri, be peace."

CHAPTER XXIV

THE HURT FOOT

OHN?"

"Ay, Peter."

"Whither are we bound?"

"To the next village, I suppose."

"Why not press forward, and ask Yeshua?"

"He is weary, Peter. He has called none of us. I think he talks with God."

"Saw any ever such a man in Israel? He must have cured three hundred folk to-day."

"More; more. He has worked since dawn, thirty an hour or thereabouts, and now the sun sets. 'Twas a great crowd. We had to ring him round and move all swiftly; but now all sick are cured."

"I doubt it, John. There are always some left over."

"I saw none; or I would have helped them forward."

"Nor I, but—nay, what's this?"

"A little Son of Precept—a limping lad of twelve crossing the road behind the Master. Wait, son."

"Yes, sir."

"I am Peter, one of Yeshua Natzri's men. This is John. Here come James, Philip, Andrew and the rest. What do they call you, son?"

"They call me Skinny, but my real name is John Barsimon."

"Are you lame, Skinny?"

"Yes, sir; lame and in pain."

"Why did you not come forward and be cured?"

"The crowd was too great. No one would let a boy through. I did not like to trouble the Master. Besides, the others needed it more than I."

"Good lad, good lad. John, the boy stood aside to make way for others. What think you?"

"We ought to cure him, Peter."

"Oh, *can* you, sirs?"

"We have cured deaf and sick and halt and blind. We have cast out devils. We have cleansed lepers. Some of us, when sent out two and two together, have raised the dead. We should be able to cure a case of lameness. Yes, son, we can cure you."

"Will you, then?"

"Of course, of course. How long have you been lame?"

"Why, since this morning."

"What's that?"

"Since late this morning."

"Why boy, what is the matter?"

"Sir, I was running down the mountain side in haste to see the Master. I have no sandals. I dashed my foot against a stone. It will be well next week but now it hurts."

"What think you, Peter?"

"What think you, Thomas?"

"What think you, John?"

"Please, Mr. John. Your eyes look kind."

"Now out upon you all, for leaving it to me. I want to cure him. A word of prayer, with hands upon his head, would do it. But, brethren, to trouble the Lord God for such a thing—to call upon the omnipotent Creator of the universe, Lord God of Israel, to cure a boy's sore toe—frankly, I dare not."

"I'm sorry. Will you, Mr. Peter?"

"No, son, it will be well in a day or two."

The small boy, standing on one foot and scratching his ankle with his other heel, questioned the remaining ten disciples with his eyes, in silence, and one by one, in silence, each shook his head. Sadly the little fellow turned to go. In the meantime, the Master, finding the Twelve failed to follow him closely as usual, had turned and come back to them. Thus little John Barsimon, turning, met him face to face.

"What is it, son?"

"I stubbed my toe. They will not cure it, sir, because they think it wrong to call on the great God for such a little thing."

"What think you?"

"That He is great enough to do anything, even little things."

"Does it hurt?"

"Yes, sir—ouch!"

"Move it again."

"Oh, *Thank* you, sir"—and with a piercing whistle addressed to some hidden comrade, John Barsimon, surnamed Skinny, darted up a cross-road and was gone.

The Master, with a twinkle in his eye, looked at John, Peter, Thomas, and the others, one by one; and, one by one, Thomas, John, Peter, and the others dropped their eyes. Nobody said anything. There was nothing to be said. But from that time on, the disciples followed the Lord more closely.

CHAPTER XXV

THE INSULT

THE Master wearied of wandering, and took pity on the great masses of sick, who crowded to him, and who found little to eat, and small shelter. Therefore, he began systematic work, sending out thirty-five pairs of advance-agents and notifying different cities of the irrigated country, that he would visit them in regular order, and at definite dates. The provision-sellers and providers of lodgings were therefore able to make due preparation; and, as a result, writers who were used to crowds of five thousand men or so, besides women and children, insist everywhere on the enormous crowds, the stupendous and phenomenal multitudes, which surrounded the Master in the Perean towns.

At each town, it was his custom to enter the Synagogue and preach. Not one man in fifty could get in, but those who did told the others what he said. According to custom some one, usually the ruler of the Synagogue, asked him to dinner; and as his twelve immediate followers, and the fifteen or twenty eminent theologians from the capital detailed by the national legislature to follow, observe, and, if necessary, oppose him, were included in the invitation, these dinners were considerable functions. Therefore, they were only possible in considerable houses, owned by men of wealth.

At some undesignated town in Perea, our Lord had

healed the sick—shoals of them—and preached in the Synagogue. After service, he went to dine at the house of one of the chief men of the town. On the porch, as part of the equipment of every considerable house, were several water-jars, stoneware crocks, holding fifteen or twenty gallons each. They were provided with dippers, or the classical earthenware equivalent, for pouring water upon the hands. It was for convenience in this water-pouring that the crocks were put outside the house on the porch. At these crocks the Jerusalem delegation ostentatiously washed their hands, pouring the water on copiously, and holding up their hands so that the water ran down "to the wrists," as was ordered in their ritual law. While doing this, they watched the Master and the Twelve, and made comments. The Master quietly ignored the crocks and walked past; and some of the Twelve, Simon Stone and Judas of Kerioth especially, ostentatiously ignored them. The reason of this byplay was that, at the first miracle of the loaves and fishes, and at the breakfast of the Twelve the next morning on some of the miraculous bread, the Master had so arranged matters that it was impossible for the multitude or for the Twelve to wash their hands. This broke the ritual law; a man-made law, not a Divine one. This struck the Pharisees as the most important fact in the great miracle of the loaves and fishes, and they made a theological point of it. Our Master, grieved and shocked, thereupon denounced them and made a theological point of omitting it. From that time on, the Twelve had made no ceremonial use of the water-pots at their hosts' doors.

The omission of hand-washing, therefore, was a theological point, and had nothing to do with questions of social courtesy. The multitudes who followed the Master from the Synagogue, and surged outside the

porch to see him pass, grasped this, and were daily amused and gratified to note the sullen efforts of the Pharisees to get washing treated as a social matter. The multitude, too, often found ritual hand-washing impracticable. The minutely rigid law, developed by scholars and priests in their studies, does not always fit practical men laboring in the open. If the Master could abolish the ritual of purifications, or make it more elastic, he might restore to the common people their rightful place in the commonwealth of Israel. As it was, practically all Galileans and Pereans, and three-quarters even of the inhabitants of Judea, were, at all times, involved in some violation of the elaborate spider's-web of ritual, and were scornfully classed by the rabbis as "Am Haaretz," the Great Unwashed, the damned.

Usually the rulers of Synagogues in Perean towns were sufficiently in touch with the Perean common people to grasp all this; or else, were intellectually intelligent enough to grasp the distinction between a theological doctrine and its emphasis, and a social and personal discourtesy. Still, the Scribes and Pharisees knew that, sooner or later, they would find a man too stupid to catch the distinction, and too little in touch with the people to realize their point of view.

At last they had found him. The Master passed into the courtyard and stood still; for he was met with the unintentional and quite unconscious neglect of the Pharisee, whose first welcome was for Pharisees. The host was occupied in greeting and seating some of the great men from the capital. As was his custom in such cases, the Master led the Twelve to the left side of the horse-shoe-shaped table, and took his place on the couches furthest from the host, the least honorable positions. Some hosts would have shown him to the chief couch.

Most would have gone to him and whispered him to come up higher. This man did neither. He consulted with the leading men of the Jerusalem delegation, said grace, and began the customary speech with which the host opened the banquet. He said:

"We welcome the eminent lawyers and theologians from the Temple, and the famous Rabbi Yeshua of Nazareth. Men of such punctilious religious method will be relieved to know that all precautions have been taken to preserve ceremonial purity. The house, the table, the food, and the servants have been purified according to the strictest interpretation of the rules of ritual cleanliness. The guests also, with the exception of Rabbi Yeshua and his followers, have complied with these rules. Should there be any ceremonial infection or ritual contamination, it can be only because these eat with unwashed hands."

The words of this speech have not been preserved, but the ideas have, for the Master answered it clause by clause. The host sat down, and the men who had suggested his act congratulated him on it.

The Perean Pharisee had committed perhaps the meanest crime; a crime so mean that modern Europe unites with ancient Asia in declaring it intolerable; a crime which even robbers, thieves, and, murderers avoid. He, a host, had insulted invited guests at his own table.

This made the dinner impossible. If any wonder why, let him pause a moment and consider, lest his own ideal of courtesy and of the relations between host and guest be growing dim. The Master was no longer a guest at the house. The nearest modern analogy is that of an ambassador of a king, his father, into whose face the host has just thrown a glass of wine.

Twenty-five or thirty men were reclining on couches

around the great horseshoe-shaped table in the courtyard, and some two hundred more were gathered on the verandas, to hear the speeches. The Master rose, and began very quietly. He addressed not the host, but the Pharisees, thereby making it plain that the attack had come from the Pharisees and not from the host personally. Quiet as was the opening, it prefaced the most terrible known denunciation. There is nothing parallel to it, nothing even approaching it, in any language. Denunciation, from that day to this, hides its diminished head and takes refuge in profanity, in despair of equalling that matchless exordium, and that perfect peroration. It is lyrical. He was at a banquet; therefore he began with an illustration taken from the dishes on the table.

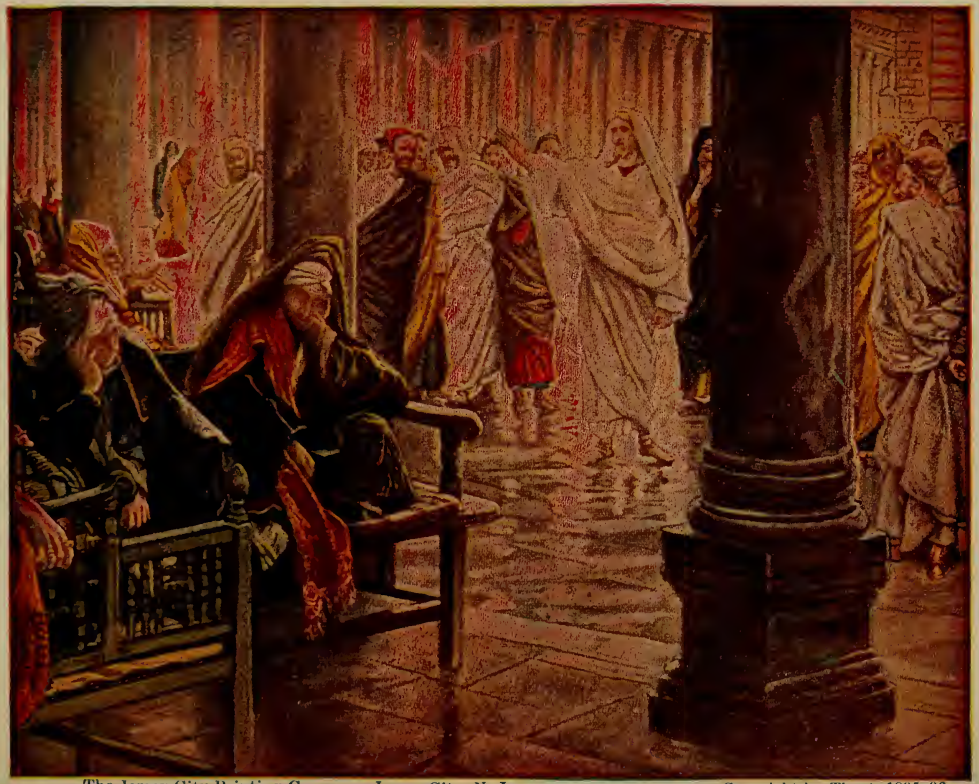
"Now do you Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and platter, but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. You fools, did not He that made that which is without make that which is within also? But rather, give alms of such things as you have; and behold, all things are clean unto you."

This was anarchy, ritualistic nihilism! The idea that dirty dishes are best cleansed by giving their contents to the hungry poor, whether taken literally or figuratively, is death to Phariseeism.

"But, woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God; these ought ye to have done and not to leave the other undone. Woe unto you, Pharisees! For ye love the uppermost seats in the Synagogues and greetings in the markets. Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye are graves, which appear not, and the men who walk over them are not aware of them."

The crowd found this a most soul-satisfying and

87. "WOE UNTO YOU, SCRIBES AND PHARISEES."
St. Matthew xxiii. 14.



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"Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites."

mouth-filling denunciation; for the public did not love the Pharisees. In Aramaic it must have been practically a lyric. It even has a recurrent refrain, like a ballad. The three marks of a Pharisee were, to make no use of any untithed thing, to keep the laws of Levitical purification, and to abstain from intercourse with all non-Pharisees. To these the Master had alluded, with an epoch-making ritual-overturning general principle, added. "Hypocrite" is Greek for "actor". The ancient actor wore a mask, and hid his true appearance. Every man who walked over a grave was made ritually unclean, for which reason graves were marked. The Pharisees had complained that, by neglecting to wash his hands, the Master made all he touched unclean. He retorted that they, by moral corruption concealed, made everyone who approached them unclean. They were like unmarked graves.

Certain doctors of Canon Law, present at table, had greatly enjoyed the speech. One of their sayings was, that silly pietists, woman Pharisees, and the penances of Phariseeism were among the chief ills of life. Still, they felt that the Master, by attacking not only the absurdities of the Pharisees, but the underlying principle of precedent—of traditionalism—attacked them. One of them, therefore, said:

"Master, in this saying you reproach us also."

"Woe unto you also, ye lawyers," flashed out the Master"; for you load men with burdens grievous to be borne, and you yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers. Woe unto you, for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. Truly, ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers; for they, indeed, kill them, and you build their tombs. Woe unto you, ye lawyers! For ye have taken away the key of knowledge; ye entered not in, your-

selves, and them that were entering, ye hindered."

The lawyers were doctors of Canon Law; but, Israel having originally been a theocracy and ruled by priests, canon law and civil law were one and the same thing. Had the reasons not been given, the speech would therefore be a terrible denunciation of that modern professional class, lawyers. The reasons, however, were given; Jesus was just. As it stands, therefore, it is a terrible indictment, not of lawyers, but of the law. As the crowd meditated and hilariously and enthusiastically commented, they saw that the reasons given were that lawyers were exempt from certain laws; that they were willing, as a class, to suppress unfavorable evidence (that of the prophets) concerning their clients, and that they had substituted precedent for equity, and made long and tangled study of codes necessary for any man who would plead and win his own just cause.

The Master was too terribly in earnest, too mournfully sad over the harm done to the helpless, to bear with the awful guilt of these trivialities. He gathered the Twelve around him with a gesture, and walked out. The Scribes and Pharisees, starting to their feet, followed him. They began to press upon him vehemently and to provoke him to speak of many things, trying to put words into his mouth.

If you wish to gather an unusually large, and unusually dense crowd, the best way is to start a bitter quarrel. Outside the house were waiting people, literally in myriads. They were climbing over each other to listen; and there came out to them the man, their rightful king, who had just spoken a most heart-filling and mouth-satisfying denunciation of the Pharisees, which had warmed the very cockles of the common people's hearts.

"He called them fools."

"He said they were greedy and wicked."

"He said their hearts were dirty."

"He said . . . He said . . . " and the crowd, enthusiastically quoting bits of the speech, surged in, and bore him off to the pasture lands outside the town to make them a speech of their own. Hilariously, angrily, triumphantly, they shouldered the Pharisees away from the Master. As for the ruler of the Synagogue, he stood before his great banquet-table, looked at his untasted feast, stroked his beard, in a dazed and confused way, and spoke—to himself; for everyone else had gone.

"So, this is the gentle Nazarene, the man who loves all little children, and is tender as a woman to the sick; who does not resent injustice, and who bears all insult patiently. This hurricane, this tornado, this lightning-flash, is a by-word for gentleness. Peaceful . . . . long-suffering . . . . tender . . . . loving . . . . gentle! It were better not to have roused him."

CHAPTER XXVI

THE HILL CREST

ATEVILLE" is the English translation of the name of a town which, in its native Aramaic form, has grown world-famous. Curiously enough there are no date palms there now. The climate has changed, and it has grown too dry for them. But London and Berlin, and New York and Pekin, and the very Hottentots and Patagonians know the village by the native name which means "Dateville"; and even the Eskimo have heard of it.

The town itself is on a level shelf near the top of the eastern escarpment of that great mountain range which shuts off Jordan valley from the Mediterranean sea. Behind it, towards the west, lies the last rise of the mountain wave which guards Jerusalem. Eastward the land drops, slope after slope, shelf after shelf, down and down and down, until the eye of the visitor from the coast is puzzled to find the mountain twice as high on this side as on that; for Jordan runs here in a great coulee, far below sea-level, in a valley rifted by some titanic earthquake, so long ago that it is utterly forgotten. The prophet Ezekiel says that some day another earthquake shall let in the sea, and make an inland and gigantic harbor where gallant galleys, without oar or sail, shall bear the commerce of a new and unknown world—but his statements proved too ample

for the geological and naval knowledge of King James' day, and were much rehashed by the translators. When that time comes, the view from Dateville will be the finest in the world. Even then it was wonderful enough, down and down through deep abysses of clear desert air, to the green valley bottom, with the river winding through; and up on the other side, a sloping bluff a mile high, and nearly a hundred miles long, of white and yellow limestone, and raw red sandstone, shading to scarlet, yellow, olive, drab, and sea-green, and all the colors of rainbows and soap-bubbles, up and up, to where the treeless crests of Moab poise, outlined in crystal clearness, against a raw-indigo sky.

At the edge of the slope, near where the long road dips down, shelf after shelf, to the liliputian city of Jericho, lying, minutely distinct, remotely small, but clear-cut as a cameo, in the green checkerboard of the irrigated valley, a woman once stood, and shaded her eyes to watch the wayfarers as they came. They grew from tiny dots, that barely moved, and which only the strongest eyesight could see, to the size of crawling ants, then of puppets, then of children, then grown men and women, cresting the slope; and more, and always more, came after them. Their grey and blue, and black and ochre mantles, or their white linen vestments shone and twinkled far down the long road, little patches of color on its sinuous curves. Rabbis wore white linen; therefore, the woman was looking for a dot of white.

The road slants up a coulee, the gully of a ravine; therefore, the woman was not at the road itself, but had walked out to the very outermost jut and point of the height, to one side of it, some distance from the village. Behind her was the backbone of Judea, a mountain ridge of limestone, and every stone embodied history. For three thousand years men had lived in these moun-

tains, and had left record of it. To her left, very far off northward, was a blink of blue, which marked one corner of the lake of Galilee. Behind it showed a triangular patch of white and rose color, and that deep purple which only mountain lovers know, where Hermon, a great mountain, lifted its snow-clad summit like a prayer. To the southeast and nearer, near enough to be outlined as if on a map, lay, at the bottom of the widening river-chasm, a lake of that deep, strange, vicious, angry, poisonous blue, which means alkali-water. Southeast, beyond it, was the purple ridge of Mount Hoar; a ridge which marked then, and, for that matter, marks now, the line between the unknown and the known; and stood and stands for mystery. The tumbled country behind it is held by tribes who, for five thousand years, have permitted no explorer to return; and the best account of it is still the record of that expedition in force which we call the Exodus. Southwest of this, and out of sight from where the woman stood, by reason of certain jutting buttresses of the Judean hills, or, at most, faintly hinted by a spider's line of blue above their tops, were the massive heights of Sinai, the mount of God. Hermon, of the Transfiguration, calls down the long chasm of Jordan valley to Sinai of the law, and both eternally point up to heaven.

There was full time for the woman, whose name was Martha, to note these things and more, for her watch was very long. There was full cause, also; for anxious eyes strained upon one tiny point, cannot long endure, and must be turned away to take in the larger features of the view, before they can be turned again to minute watching. Moreover, not only eyes, but brain were forced to turn upon these matters; for we are never half so much alive to the strangeness and beauty

of this wonder-world which we call "commonplace," as when great sorrow or the fear of death has gripped us, yet we must pause and wait. Therefore Martha saw, with the seeing eye, the wonders of the Lord in this most wonderful of all His lands, and, seeing, felt that awe whence wisdom springs.

Many wayfarers came up the long winding road, for it was the main highway between two great cities; and not a few of them were rabbis, or priests, and so wore white. Therefore poor Martha, mad with the useless ecstacy of all impatience, was shuttled to and fro, from joy to black despair, a dozen times a day. Now and then, a gleam of white, surrounded by a dozen dots of black, would show at the very furthest limit of all eyesight; and then delight, like a great flame among dry thorns, would blaze within her; for the rabbi she expected would have a group of followers. Then, after that delay which makes the heart sick, the delight would die, flicker and flame, and rise and die again, and at last perish, as the man came closer and proved to be a stranger.

Every now and then, perhaps once in an hour, perhaps once in two, a messenger would come, a quiet woman of the servant type, and speak to Martha. The words of their conversation changed each time, but the thought never varied. Martha asked, by word or look:

"Does he live?"

And, by word or sign, the messenger replied, "He lives, but he is weaker. Is the Master in sight yet?"

"Not yet; but there is a rabbi very far off, down the long road, who may be he. Tell Mary so. Where is Simon?"

"He sits by the bedside."

"Tell Mary to pray, and tell me quickly of any change. You have my leave to go."

Each time that this messenger left her, Martha turned more eagerly to her searching of the many-colored landscape for the Master, and prayed more earnestly to the God of her fathers, that he might come soon. It was an ironic contrast that the inner world of her thoughts should be so shadowed, when the outer world, before her eyes, was so crystalline with color and with light. Like all irrigated country, the great chasm of the Jordan has an atmosphere phenomenally clear; while, as for color, the rocks of Moab are the tombstones and burial-ground of all dead rainbows. Even at noon, the blank glare of the vertical heavens is changed there from sheer white to a blinding flicker of half-hinted hues; while, when the stately sunset sweeps into the west, there could be nothing like them but a bonfire of roses. It is not for nothing that one whole country, there, is named Red Edom; and it is more than mere chance that, when a certain great prophet, looking across this valley, dreamed a vision of the Messiah striding gigantic from the east, and towering heavenward, he saw the skirts of his tremendous mantle all splashed and stained with red.

For days, ever since her messenger, mounted on a swift horse, had left to search for the Master, Martha had looked out across the green Jordan chasm, into this tumbled world of red and tawny-yellow mountains, and had watched them change, with the changing light, as she debated chances, and calculated distances. He was curing the sick, and preaching God's good news, in the towns and cities in the irrigated valleys that bit into the mountain wall across Jordan. It would take so many hours for the messenger to learn where he was, so many more to reach him. He would return quickly, but on foot. Therefore the messenger would arrive first. If only the Master would come quickly, quickly. Oh

God of Israel, grant that he come soon. And still, one by one, the many wayfarers emerged from Jericho and thronged the long road.

In that hushed moment, when the day is born, Martha had wakened. Before dawn was done, while yet the wind from out the great abyss was chill and cool, she was at her post to watch for the Master and bring him, without a moment's loss of time, to the bed of a slowly dying man. She saw many things that day, but not the Master. Early sunrise is first purple, then violet, then shades into either gold or scarlet. This was a red sunrise, like a volcano playing, till from the furious crater of the skies, the crimson sun erupted into day; and through all those high thin trebles and deep organ-notes of red, poor Martha watched the road, and tried to be at peace. Then came morning, when, through the troubled clearness of blue gulfs of air, down the long vistas of solemn hillside beauty, she watched the road. Then came noon, when fair and blue the still sky soared, but under foot the whole great chasm lay in a sun-swoon, and the sick eye swam in quest of quivering shadows, and found none. Then afternoon, when white winds blew, and the wheat-fields in the valley sent up their faint, pure odor, sweet as the fragrance of remembered love, and stirred in distant waves, as the wind burrowed through them, until the very sight was melody. Every half-hour's movement of the sun changed, all day long, the aspect of the valley; but never, in any of its aspects, did it frame the Master.

Poor Martha, bustling, capable, practical housewife, with much to do, and no time for contemplation, changed, that day. One who knows every need of each of us, stood on some slope of the Perean hills, much too far off for seeing; but, save for distance, there was

nothing but clear air between them; and by some diviner vision of the soul, he must have known of her. Mary sent more insistently and oftener, as the day grew old; but Martha, watching the road and ready to dash down the slope and fetch the Master, could only send, more and more sadly, the answer, "He is not yet in sight." At last it drew toward sunset, and the long shadows of the western range crept, in transparent purple, across the valley; and, as the golden fields upon the river darkened, so darkened Martha's heart. One of the many men on horseback, plodding up the road—she had watched him long, but her eyes were now grown dim with unshed tears—stood in his stirrups and waved up to her, and all her hopes blazed up again in golden flame; but when she wiped her eyes and looked again, it was not the Master, but only her messenger.

It was no use to call, for round such jutting points of the Judean hills as that where Martha stood, the wind, melodious, one long sweet anthem, flows forevermore. Men sometimes have been silent through long ages, yet never has the Master's land been left without its praise harmonious. Everywhere God makes Himself a music after its kind, but here He has assembled all kinds. The deep and dreadful organ-note of thunder is least common of all; but, though the land is now blasted and barren, the salt sea-surf is still choral on one side of it, and the river whispers on the other, and, from the desert beyond the river, and the sea beyond the surf, and up and down the chasm from Horeb to Sinai, the great winds wander, always, in the faint sweetness of a solemn hymn, and all the breezy hills still praise their Maker. Silently, therefore, Martha turned to eager watching of the road again, but saw no Master.

The quiet serving-woman came up soon, and stood, and Martha turned to her:

"Is he alive yet?"

"Yes, but weaker."

"Tell Mary our messenger returns. Bid her hasten."

The cloud-dress passes through the sunset-furnace and comes out gold. The precious ore passes through a smaller, and a fiercer furnace, and comes out lasting gold. The spirit in adversity may pass through a smaller, fiercer furnace still, no larger than a breaking human heart, and come out gold eternal. With the long sunset glories streaming upward from the hills behind her, Mary came very swiftly to Martha, and they stood together as their messenger, a weary man with the dust of travel on him, strode up to them and made obeisance.

"What said the Master?"

"I left him outside Gerasa, high in the valley of the brook Jabbock, a long day's ride from here. He went apart from the multitude with me, last night, and heard my story."

"What said he?"

"Tell them," he said, "this sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby."

"Oh Mary, he is saved. Are you sure that he said that this sickness is not unto death?"

"Quite sure. The words are graven on my memory. I too, love the young master."

"Let us hasten back, Martha, and tell Simon."

"Wait, Mary. Some one has cried out in the village and here comes Hanna, running."

"Take courage, Martha. He said the sickness is not unto death."

"She has thrown off her head-dress, Mary, and disarranged her hair; and she is weeping."

"Are you quite sure, Baruch, that the Master said that the sickness is not unto death?"

"Quite sure."

"Then take courage, Martha. What is it, Hanna?"

The quiet serving-woman, quiet now no longer, had reached them. She stood a moment, looking into their faces, then spoke:

"Lazarus, your brother, is dead."

CHAPTER XXVII

EPHRAIM

NCE upon a time, Yeshua Bardawid, the Prophet of Nazareth, took a vacation. It was just before he went up to Jerusalem for that last great Passover when he was lifted up; and the Gospels give only a line to it, for he neither traveled, nor taught, nor gathered the people together for mighty works, but just stayed still, and rested. He had rested before, once, at the place where John baptized, but there he had taught and healed, and many believed on him; but now, he did not even teach, and there is no record.

He stayed at Ephraim. Nobody knows where Ephraim is. He must have accepted an invitation from someone whom he had cured of some great and terrible thing, for that was his custom; and when he went to visit at that person's house, he liked it so well that he rested there. The restfulness of that rest stretches down all the centuries. The Scribes and Pharisees, when they found that he did no teaching, went home again, as they had done once or twice before. Perhaps some of the Apostles went home too. He cured all the sick people in the village and all the insane in the caves nearby, for that was his habit; and then, for days and days, did nothing. He was praying, and gathering his strength for that great and terrible day we call "Good Friday," but no one knew it.

Now, whenever Our Lord rested, he spent much of his time with children. There is no record, but in this matter the certainties of human nature supplement the silences of Holy Writ. He who said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me" certainly loved children, and the little people know their lovers at a glance. The curly-headed, dimpled lunatics are wiser that the Seven Sages in reading hearts, and surely they read his. For the first time in three years, he had leisure; and, for a lover of children, leisure and the companionship of the little people are the same. The crowd knew him as Prophet of Nazareth. The children did not know exactly what a prophet was, but they knew that he had something to do with God, and could tell them of Him. Besides, if he had his rights, he would be a king. This alone was enough to put a fringe of peeping heads about each doorway and set bright eyes sparkling over every parapet.

He knew them by name, of course. Mary and Susan, and Sam, and Eli, and Dan, and David were personal friends of his in a day. He who told the world that, unless we become as little children, we cannot see God, was most certain of all to follow his own prescription, to cure little Joshua's bumped head and to comfort Miriam for her broken cart. We think he mended the cart; mended it, not by miracle, but with string and glue. Surely the same power that raised dead Lazarus, healed little Jonathan's sore thumb and cured the bruises when tiny Daniel tumbled off the well-curbing. He who, in the Parables, told the thirty best short stories for grown-ups in all the world, must have told fascinating stories to whole armfuls of little people who came to him; stories beginning: "When Abel was a little boy," or, "Once upon a time, there was an angel." There is no direct record. The Apostles, even if there,

were much too dignified to join such a group. But in this matter the deep instincts of the heart make good the gaps in Gospel narrative.

We can imagine, therefore, the Prophet of Nazareth coming out of the house, as was his custom, and sitting down under the three palm-trees by the well-curb in the cool of the day. Little Miriam Bath Neri, who was two years old, and not always quite steady on her chubby legs, would trot out after him. She did not mean to be disrespectful, but she stumbled on a stone and plunged into his lap. He gathered her into his arms and put her on his knee, and the other children took this as a signal and clustered round him. They were greatly eager today because Eli, son of Tolmi, had found and brought back Susan's pet lamb, which had strayed, and the lamb was sick. It would not eat, and when you tried to make it walk, it stood still and trembled.

"Please, Lord," said Susan, holding it up, "cure my lamb." She used the word for speaking to a king.

"Do you think it right for me to cure a lamb, little maid?"

"Not if there were sick people here uncured; but you have cured them all. Oh, please do."

"Very well. Give it here. Now take it back and let it run and play."

"Oh, thank you, sir."

The lamb ran away, and the children, now a score or so in number, gathered closer. "Now," they said, "tell us a story."

"Once upon a time, there was a little boy. He lived in the great city of Alexandria, where they build big ships. His people, Joseph and Mary his mother, had gone there because Joseph was a carpenter and could work on the ships, and a great city is a good place to hide in. They had to hide, because a king wanted to

kill the little boy. The very first things that boy remembers were the crowds, and the narrow streets, and the great tall tenement house they lived in, the gardens around the temples, the lighthouse, the blue lake, and the blue sea. There is not much place in a great crowded city for little boys to run and play; so his mother used to take him up on the flat house-top where he could see the lake, or to the gardens where the animals lived in cages. There was a lion, and some ostriches, a river-horse, some hyenas, and an elephant."

"Oh, tell us about the elephant."

"No, about the lion."

"No, about why the wicked king wanted to kill the boy?"

"That was in the days of the great taxing, the first taxing, before any of you were born. The king had heard the little boy would grow up to be king of all the earth, so he thought he would kill him to save his own throne. He heard about him because three Magi from Persia, who worship the one true God, came on great camels from the east, bearing gold and spices. They had seen the little boy's star in the east and came to give the spices to him, and they asked the king where he was."

"Did the litle boy have a star? Did the king know?"

"Yes, the little boy had a star. An angel, named Michael, told one of the great prophets, long ago, how long it would be before the little boy was born; and the prophet wrote it down for the Magi that when two stars that were far apart had come together in the sky, then was the time. The king knew because he asked the priests, and the priests remembered that another prophet had written where it would be. They had heard, too, about what the shepherds saw. There are shepherds at Abraham's tower, and some of them stay

awake all night every night and watch God's sheep. So they were awake the night the little boy was born. So God sent an angel, named Uriel, to tell them about it. Uriel is one of the captains of the Lord's host, and they wanted to come too, so he brought his host with him. They told the shepherds, and the shepherds went and saw the baby. They found him in a stable, in the ruined vault of the old castle of David, because there was no room for them at the inn. The shepherds told everybody, and so the priests knew."

"And I know too, now," said Eli; "You were the little boy."

"Yes, I was the little boy."

Miriam nestled a little closer. "Now," she said, "tell about the lion."

"Well, one day the lion looked at the little boy, and thought he would like to rub his head against him."

"Was you scared?"

"Oh no. Gabriel and Michael were there to see that nothing happened. Nobody else could see them, but the little boy could, and so could the lion."

"Tell about Gabriel."

"Gabriel is one of the greatest of the holy angels. He stands in the presence of God, and is no more afraid than you would be. When the cruel king died, and it was time for the little boy to come back home, Gabriel told Joseph. He had to get into one of Joseph's dreams to do it. Gabriel had told the little boy's mother about him before he was born."

"Is Gabriel here now?"

"No, but Oriel is. Oriel is a captain of the Lord's host, too. You cannot see him, but he is between you and the biggest palm."

"I can see him," said little Miriam, "he is very

bright, and he is smiling at me. There is some one with him."

"That is his friend, Uriel. They have their hosts with them, to keep the wrong kind of people away from here; but even little Miriam cannot see the hosts, because they are scattered round here for miles and miles."

"Why can't *we* see Uriel and Oriel?"

The Lord did not answer, but looked at the children, one by one; and one by one, they dropped their eyes.

"Was it so bad, Lord?" asked one. "I did not mean to do it," said another. "I will always tell truth after this," said a third. "Forgive me," said a fourth. "Forgive us all."

There was a moment's pause, while the Lord looked from face to eager face. Then he bowed his head.

"I see them both," gasped Susan. "And I—and I—and I—" the others added; "But, oh, they fade."

"Was it in token of forgiveness, Lord, we saw them?" Eli asked. "We did not need it, for we saw your face."

"No, lad, it was only because they were very near and eager. If they had stayed, you could not but have told of them. Besides, you would have seen the other children."

"The other children?"

"Yes. The king killed other children, when he tried to kill the little boy. So now they go with him wherever he goes."

"I wants to go with you wherever you go," said little Miriam, sturdily.

"Some day you shall, dear, some day you shall. I am come that all little children, that believe on me, may go wherever I go."

"And I, when I grow up, will fight for you, and go wherever you go, too," said big Daniel, Susan's brother.

"You know not what you pledge, young soldier. It

is a long way, first, and hard, and I may have to come for you at the last fight; but, for this word's sake, go you shall."

"Oh, take me, take me, take us all."

"All who believe on me may come, if they will. You do not understand now; but some day you shall understand—and believe.

"And some day, then, may we gather together under the trees, like this, and will you tell us a story?"

"Yes, if you ask it then, some day you shall; but then you shall tell me stories—about yourselves."

"And what then?"

"Then you shall come with me, and I will show you the Father. But now you must go home to your mothers; for twilight falls, and I must go into the wilderness—to pray."

The Master rose, the group dissolved, and, by ones and twos, the children trotted home. I do not know about their later homecoming, though it was near two thousand years ago, and they have long gone home. Nor do I know whether they, or any other children, stand yet upon the crystal sea; but this I do know, that if any tiny toddler on uncertain feet, come to the sea of glass as it were mingled with fire, none dare stop him. The captains of the Lord's Host salute, in memory of their King, who was once a child; the Harpers, harping on their harps, open their ranks; the four and twenty Elders stand aside; the Four Great Beasts make way; and the little one is free to adventure over the golden sea, toil up the great steps, pass under the rainbow like unto an emerald, and nestle in the arms of his dear, dear friend, the Lamb upon the Throne.

CHAPTER XXVIII

ORIEL AND ANTAIR

AZARUS, we stand here, waiting. Can you tell nothing? He is dying. We all so want to hear of the world beyond death. You know, and the widow's son knows, and Jairus' daughter knows; and John says the others are like you; they say nothing."

"You asked Him many things, Mary."

"But that I did not dare. At least, tell if you were forbidden to speak, that I may cease to trouble you."

"Not forbidden, Mary. There are no words. If the newborn babe could speak to the babe unborn, how could it tell of light, or breath, or the mother's face?"

"But you stand here, and watch our hearts break, and say nothing."

"None would believe."

"I would!"

"Perhaps you would, my sister, perhaps you would. So be it then. Know, that when I stand still and listen, my thoughts are like two voices talking of the Beloved Master."

"That I can understand."

"One of them believes Him Son of God and loves Him. The other believes and hates Him—and me. Antair talks much; for if, by talking, he can distract Oriel's attention, then he can injure me. My coming back is an affront to death. They want me injured."

"What says he, brother?"

"He calls it strange and dreadful, that the Son of God should interfere with the Prince of this World, to save mankind—like stealing his sheep from a butcher. Oriel says they are God's sheep. Antair says it is a shameful thing to all the powers spiritual, that the greatest of them should incarnate, shrouding himself in dirty flesh. Oriel says thereby he makes flesh pure and clean, not dirty. Antair says the whole matter in debate is wrong. Duty to God is owed through the Thrones, and Dominions, and Principalities, and Powers, which God himself has set over us, and the proof that God has set them over us is that they are stronger than we. He has given them power. Therefore, they must be right. Besides, if they are wrong, we are not to blame. It is their fault, not ours. Oriel says, 'thou shalt worship the Lord, thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.' Telling their names has called them near us. They are speaking now."

Lazarus was silent. Mary watched him with straining attention. She could never be quite sure whether it was her own thought, or a voice—a golden voice. If it was a voice, she did not hear it with her ears but in her heart; and it spoke not Aramaic, Greek, or any earthly tongue, but the very language of thought itself.

"Your wish is granted, Lazarus," it said. "She shall hear. Stand back, Antair."

"Oriel, hail," answered another voice, a hateful voice. "I want to look at the folly of the Hated One—your beloved Master. If he had stayed on his throne, we never could have touched him. What triple madness brought him down here, born a subject of the Prince of this World, under the law of death? Your King has come into our power, Oriel. He has quivering flesh and nerves to pierce and hurt, a human heart to break; and

all you Sons of Light must look on, sheathed swords withheld, forbidden to protect him."

"You too were once a son of light, Antair."

"True, and my throne was higher than yours. Your power has grown. I am not strong enough to hurt you now——except through him; but him we *can* hurt. It is his own law, Oriel, that those who take the sword shall perish by the sword. Our Prince invented death. Now we have your Prince where he must die by his own law, or ours. If he do not take the sword, and use his own power to protect himself, he must perish by our law. If he should use power against men to protect himself, then he must perish by his own law, and the universe with him. That is why great Thrones, Dominions, Powers, and Principalities, beyond the power of our Prince, have hastened hither, from the utmost stars, to watch and tremble. For the Hated One is the source of Life, Oriel, and if he take the sword, by his own law, he must perish and you with him—and you with him. How would you like to die, Oriel, angel and immortal? But if he do not take the sword, *he* dies."

"Is that your plan, to force him to use power in self-defense against the sons of men? But if you could succeed and all creation perish, then you too die."

"Of course, of course. What of it? We do not find our lives so happy since cast out from him, that we should care to keep them."

"As for the Sons of God who come here, from all the universe, to watch, Antair, it is not from fear. They love him."

"Perhaps. I can remember once when there was such a thing as love, but how it felt, I have forgotten. Why was your side so full of exultation, Oriel, the other day?"

"What do you mean?"

"Why, when the children met him with palm-branches and cried, 'Hosannah to the Son of David,' and he said that if they had not done so, the very stones would cry out, you sons of God were all so full of joy. It was nothing to be joyful about—just riding into the city on a donkey. Look at him now."

"Antair, the sons of God have borne with you, and borne with you, the evil powers. We are forbidden to use force except to protect others; but that use has proved our force greater than yours. If he would let us, we could sweep you out of the universe, into the lake of fire and brimstone, into the second death. That day when he let them greet him as King, he made plain that some day he will be king of earth, and wrest dominion from the Prince of this world. He made plain that, strict as the law holds now, the time will come when we can take the sword without perishing by the sword. It was the declaration of war, Antair—and your doom. Stand back!"

"Next day he cleansed the temple, Oriel, driving out the money changers, and upsetting the commercial paper of the world. That sealed his doom. The second day he defeated the theologians of the nation in debate, publicly, before ten thousand people, proving before men and angels that the great Bible authorities of the nation are grossly ignorant of their own Bible. That doubly sealed his doom. The third day, he called on God to answer him, saying, Father, glorify Thy name, and God answered. Like thunder articulate, in a voice audible to men, God answered Him. The whole city heard, and said 'It thundered,' and went on with their wickedness. The thing was too great for them. Trebly that sealed his doom. There is a man named Judas, whom we own. Satan has entered into him. Our Prince can act in the world of flesh as well as yours.

Through him, our Prince has caused your Prince to be nailed by hands and feet to a cross, Oriel, and presently he shall die—or else use his power against his own laws to save himself; and in that case, he will also die; and all creation with him. I should be glad to cease to suffer, and enter into oblivion."

"For you and yours, Antair, is no oblivion. You have given the needed object-lesson to the sons of light. Without it, angels could fall, and did. With it, the universe is safe forever. All men and angels know now that absence of prayer, attention centered on anything except our Father, leads to indifference, and indifference to neglect, and neglect to disobedience, and disobedience to hatred, and hatred to rebellious madness, and rebellious madness would blot out the universe, if it could, and murder God. That knowledge has made all angels safe forever."

The golden voice ceased. There was a pause; then the hateful voice burst out, "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Save thyself and us."

"He winces, Oriel, but does not come down. If he do not come soon, it will be too late. He will be dead and die according to our law. What is he doing, Oriel? I see his thoughts, but do not understand."

"He is reviewing all the sins of all the ages of all the world, Antair, and assuming the responsibility for each. Carrying out the will of the Father, he created man; and if man had never been created, there could have been no sin. He is not guilty. Mankind are guilty, and you and yours that tempt them. He is not guilty, but he is responsible. He makes good not the wrong doing, but the wrong done."

"He did the same thing in Gethsemane last night. I saw him."

"Yes; but he did not carry it so far. He *could* not,

or he would have died, his work unfinished, mankind unsaved. Oh, my Best Beloved! Would God I were great enough to die instead of you!"

There was a moment's pause; then, as if from all the universe—or from her own heart—Mary heard the great cry, from thousands upon ten thousands of golden voices: "Oh, our Best Beloved! Would God we were great enough to die instead of you!" She echoed it, and suddenly, as if scales had fallen from her eyes, she could see.

She was near the centre of a great hollow sphere of faces; myriads of millions of faces. Earth had passed from her sight. The great passover mob, watching the crucifixion, were still there, though she saw their souls now, not their bodies; but the earth they stood on had disappeared, as had even the cross on which our Lord was crucified. Above them, the massed multitudes of millions of the sons of God looked down, eyes bathed in tears. Below them, the legions of evil looked up, malignant, intent, sneering. Between them, Our Lord was reviewing the last of the sins of mankind. She saw the pictures of his thoughts—beyond her comprehension; a great strange world of power, where men and women, ten times as many as her world held, used enginery of power, more wonderful to her than the fabled powers of magicians, to sin, and sin, and sin—in Christ's name. In the name of Him who hung upon the cross, she saw them lie, wage war, give rein to lust, steal, slander, murder, torture, and defraud, and hate, hate, and defraud each other, and always in the name of Him upon the cross. For this too, he assumed responsibility. If he had not made them, they could not have done this. The devils laughed, and jeered, and nudged each other. She could not see plainly, or she would have perished. He saw, in one clear perfectness of realization, all that

each of all mankind deserved. Much of what they did was of such a nature that it is not to be so much as named among us; but it causes fear and shame, and shame and fear, such fear, cut off from God. All this he had assumed. Then came one searing, realizing glimpse of what must happen to all these people. All this he had assumed; for an instant, at least, he felt in full, their feeling, and was cut off from God.

The physical sun was draped in darkness. Absence of God is spiritual darkness and from the world spiritual God, the Father, had partially, and for a moment, withdrawn Himself. Through the silence of that horror of great darkness, pierced, like a sword, a voice from the cross: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" And his suffering, human heart broke with sorrow at the sins of man.

The darkness lasted but a moment. Dying, he said: "I thirst;" then, "It is finished;" then, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit." At each, the tense spiritual universe quivered. Then, coming down from the cross—for Mary saw, and I speak of Himself, not his dead body—he advanced towards the Prince of this World and the powers of evil. He had endured their worst. They could no more. One moment they faced Him, then broke and fled.

Oriel spoke to Lazarus: "You are safe now. Antair has gone. Never again can he injure, or do more than tempt you. The Son of God is Lord now of the dead, as well as of the living. Both sides of the grave are His. He has burst through the gates of death and the spirits which are in prison shall hear and follow Him."

"Oriel—brother—do not leave us, Oriel."

"Remember that he told you, on the third day he rises from the dead. He needs me now, and you do not. We shall meet again."

Gradually, as a sword sinks into the sheath, Mary's thoughts and vision came back to the things of this world. The crowd was gone. Though but mid-afternoon, it was dark, all but one blood-red streak on the horizon. There was a great earthquake; and, outlined black against the blood-red gleam, a laden cross upon the crown of Calvary swayed to and fro. Around her was the sound of weeping among the friends of Jesus, and low murmurs of "Woe! Woe!" Mary reached out her hand to Lazarus.

"Shall we tell them, brother?" she asked.

"None would believe us. No. Master of Earth, and sure foundation for the peace of heaven, He triumphs now! All's well."

CHAPTER XXIX

THE PRIEST OF JUPITER

ERTAINLY, sir, come in. I am the priest of Jupiter at Jerusalem. Yes, it is quite true that I have been a soldier—Caius Decius, decurion of the third century of the tenth legion, given the detail when discharged, instead of sent to a colony, because I am no farmer. Yes, it is lonely, except when the legions leave their eagles here under guard. A sociable old idolator, am I? Oh well, young man—Luke, did you say your name is?—sociable I am and old, and I had rather be an idolator than worship the one God of this city; that is, if he be like his people. I have seen that from the temple steps here, which disgusts even an old Roman soldier—and Romans are not squeamish.

"What do I mean? Why, crucifixions. Any in particular? Certainly, when we crucified their king. Tell you about it and speak freely? Well, your wine is good; but if, at your request, I tell why I despise your people, you must not resent it. Is that a bargain?

"Do you know how this temple came here? In outline, but no details? Well, Pontius Pilate marched the legions in with their eagles, and the people rose, for there must be no idols in Jerusalem. Pilate could not be bribed (the more fool he) and legions are not easily defeated, so they sent to Tiberius, the emperor, (may his name be adored) with great bribes for Sejanus, his

favorite, and in the meantime organized all the Jews of Caesarea, and wept by squads in front of Pilate's palace day and night, till Pilate wearied, and called back the troops. Tiberius ordered, through Sejanus, that a temple to Jupiter be built outside the city and, in future, the eagles left there. He left it to the Jews to provide place, and Annas put it between the slaughter house and gallows; so here we are by both. I can sit on my steps and fight flies and watch them cutting up sheep and cattle, or turn the other way and see the crucified slowly dying. Nice place for a temple to Jupiter, isn't it?

"The crucifixion of their King? Oh, I sat, and saw it all. The crowd kept off my steps, thinking them curst, and I could see over the heads of the multitude.

"The execution squad were rather sorry for him, but handled him worse instead of better for it, because they scorned the crowd and he was the crowd's king. Think of it! Armed men enough to make three hundred legions in and around the city, all angry with us, and not enough courage to attack one small execution squad and save their king. Why, they could have trampled us to death without attacking. It is enough to make a man sick to think there is a whole nation of such cowards. They cry out because we tyrannize and hold them under heel. 'Tis all they're fit for. There is no soundness in them. Were I procurator, I would grind the heel harder.

"They milled to and fro, like sheep, and watched us crucify him. When the crucifixion squad took their customary drink of wine, they toasted him and the crowd snarled. I did not think that they had nerve enough. Their priests had fear that they would try a rescue, and taunted him to keep the crowd quiet, but they might have spared their pains. That crowd dared not attack a sheep, a lamb, a kitten. I think I might

have said 'Shoo,' and flapped my arms, and they had fled. There is grim stuff in them? I hope you're right. Myself, I would not wish such pitiful manikins to dwell on earth. But I have seen no signs of any courage. You say he was a Jew? Of course. I had forgot that. Then one offsets the other. Pilate was a bold man to crucify, Petronius a bolder to guard, but a bolder man than Pilate or Petronius hung upon the cross that day and made his will, and welcomed thieves to Paradise.

"There was another bold man, too, come to think of it. He was a Jew from Cyrene, and he ordered our men to be easier on the prisoner. Think of the spectacular magnificence of that vast insolence. A civilian Jew gave orders to a Roman execution squad! They swept him off his horse and laid the cross upon him. Later, he gave the King a drink of wine against orders. I did not see the first, but the second deed I saw. Was it dark? Of course. I had left my steps, and elbowed closer. Why, when I am bored with executions? Because this was different. The crowd was from all over the world. The priests were there—and they never come. Pilate had legally declared this man the rightful King. There was a darkness unnatural at midday, preparatory to an earthquake. We all felt it coming, without quite knowing what it was. What is the feeling? Like the strain before a great battle, only tenser. I like to see a little group of our men hold down a mob of thousands by sheer courage. Besides, I knew if anything broke out they would kill me, and preferred to go down back to back with some good legionary. Then, when I got where I could see his face, I did not care to leave—nor stay—nor live—nor watch—nor break away.

"Tell you of it? Man, I have no words. How shall a fat, old legionary, with no book-sense, tell of the woe, and love, and wonder of all the world? Why think the

crowd might riot, if such cowards? Man, man, everything was changed for all who saw his face. It was a change and shifting of all values. Things seemed worth while that had been valueless before, and things that had ruled life seemed less than nothing. Had it lasted, I could have grown a good man—and a great one; but ah, it passed. I long for wine again now, and for women, for empty chatter, and for ease of the flesh, and, longing, know them worthless. I have no wish to search for God my Father, to sacrifice myself, and die for others, yet I know that once that seemed the best of all. He must have been a great and good magician to cast such glamor on me.

"What happened? Nothing. Nothing for hours. Slowly the day grew darker. For no good cause, no cause at all, the very hearts were torn from us, and yet we could not look away. We stood till we were weary and fit to drop, and did not know it. The darkness grew complete at the ninth hour. Then suddenly, he cried out. Oh, what a voice! It echoed in the darkness and the silence, back from the city walls—and from our souls. I did not know the language, but the man next me translated, gasping. He said, 'My God, my God why hast THOU forsaken me?'

"Then something broke in our hearts. Some men about the cross cried out. It grew a little lighter. We could see, dimly, men as shadows walking. He spoke again, but those around me could not understand him. There was a movement round the cross. A man ran forward. A sentry cried: 'Let be,' but he kept on, and lifted something to the Lord's lips. A pause, then some one gasped, and the crowd swayed and flickered, as word passed through it from the sentinels: 'The man is dead.'"

"We stood still. In the reaction from that awful

tension, off on the distant edges of the crowd, a shrill fool laughed. Then something rumbled in the bowels of the mountains, and the hills crashed, and the ground rose beneath us and tripped the whole great multitude, unwilling, to their knees, then flung them on their faces. The strong earth reeled and staggered. The thieves, upon their swaying crosses, screamed in anguish. The crowd rose and ran to and fro. The darkness shut down black again, and I crawled to my temple steps here, and lay on them. I did not dare to go inside, lest the roof fall. Jupiter is a great God, but small beside Jehovah. Then slowly the darkness cleared away, and all was as before, save that the crowd was fled away, and the Lord was dead. Yes, I call him Lord. Petronius was a good officer. He ought to know. Do I still think—God—greater than Jupiter? I do. He is his God. Could I worship Him without being a Jew, I would. You say there is a way, but I must lose my place and perquisites to follow it—perhaps be slain? I am a soldier, old, and fat, and worthless, but ready yet for one more great adventure ere I die. You wonder that a garrulous, drunken, old heathen—nay, you thought it, though you did not say it—should play the part of a brave man? Luke, Luke, lad, I watched Jesus of Nazareth die upon the cross, and I looked into his eyes."

CHAPTER XXX

THE REPORT TO CAIAPHAS

SCENE: The courtyard of the High Priest's palace. Time: Night.

PERSONS: Caiaphas; Annas, Members of Sanhedrin; Guards; Servants.

(A frantic knocking at the gates. Voice outside.)

VOICE: Open, open.

GUARD *(Opening gate):* What is it? *(Enter messenger.)*

MESSENGER *(Panting):* Summon the High Priest. Jesus of Nazareth has risen!

VOICES WITHIN THE HOUSE: The High Priest, Caiaphas, Jesus of Nazareth has risen!

(There is a pause while the messenger gets his breath. Caiaphas hurries into the courtyard.)

CAIAPHAS: Speak, Neri.

MESSENGER: You set me to watch the guard. I hid in the garden. Jesus of Nazareth came forth. A man of light came down from the sky and rolled away the stone. There was an eathquake. Knowing the earthquake must have roused you, I came here at speed.

CAIAPHAS: Nonsense! You rave, Neri. Yet something must have happened. John, fetch Annas. Scatter, some of you, and summon the Sanhedrin.

(They scatter. There is a clatter of iron-shod feet outside and a soldier, running slowly because of his armor, enters.)

SOLDIER: Where is the High Priest?

CAIAPHAS: Here.

SOLDIER: The tomb is empty.

CAIAPHAS: What tomb?

SOLDIER: The tomb in Joseph's garden. Jesus of Nazareth is gone.

CAIAPHAS: Gone?

SOLDIER: There was a light, blinding, too great for seeing. We fell on our faces as dead men. Then came a great earthquake. When it was over and we rose, the stone was rolled away from the door of the tomb. We took torches and looked in. The tomb was empty. The body was gone.

CAIAPHAS: Saw you no more?

SOLDIER: No more. The centurion sent me for orders. More, others may have seen.

CAIAPHAS: You slept and dreamed.

SOLDIER: Those off duty slept. But we on guard and the centurion were awake.

CAIAPHAS: Who is your centurion to-night?

SOLDIER: Caius Carina.

NOMENCLATOR: Annas, the High Priest, with members of the Sanhedrin.

ANNAS *(Entering):* So, so; what we feared has happened, has it, and the disciples stole his body away while we slept?

CAIAPHAS: Neri says differently.

SOLDIER: We did not sleep.

(The noise of a troop of foot, iron-shod and armed, outside. Orders. The guard enters, in ranks, every tenth man and the Centurion with a torch.)

ANNAS *(Sternly):* Why leave your post?

CENTURION *(With equal sternness):* Why guard an empty tomb?

ANNAS: Your story.

CENTURION: An armed man from the sky. A light

too great for clear seeing. He rolled away the stone. There was a great earthquake. Blinded, we saw no more. When the light died, we rose, lit torches, searched the tomb and garden, found nothing, and came here.

ANNAS: Saw no one more?

CENTURION: Publius, sleeping, had his eyes shaded by his cloak. Speak.

PUBLIUS: I woke because of shouting and a great light. The man of light was sitting on the stone. Then came so keen a brilliance from the tomb, I too, was blinded.

ANNAS: It was in Joseph's garden. What says he? Whom have you there?

CENTURION: Joseph himself. He came out after the earthquake to see how we fared.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA *(Stepping forward):* The tomb is empty, Annas, and the garden. So much I saw.

ANNAS: What think you?

JOSEPH: That He is risen, as He said.

ANNAS: Caiaphas, what gold have you in the house?

CAIAPHAS: Three thousand shekels.

ANNAS: Order it brought. Caius Carina, you and your men slept on watch.

CENTURION: Sir, they did not.

ANNAS: You dare contradict me?

CENTURION: Pilate would crucify the guard that slept. Press us too far, old man, and you die with us. It is your fault setting us to guard one who was Son of God.

ANNAS: Nonsense! Pilate loaned you to me. Should the matter come to his ears—

CENTURION: The guard at the northern gate know all—

ANNAS: Well, then, *when* the matter comes to his ears, I will hold you harmless. You were under my

orders. The disciples stole away his body while you slept.

CENTURION: If we slept, how know who stole it or that it was stolen? We will not do this.

ANNAS: Is there anything a Roman will not do for gold? Here it comes—a heavy burden for a strong man. The Passover crowd, three million Jews, are camped about the city. We cannot have a riot at the Passover. Obey—and I hold you harmless. Anyone may be struck blind by lightning, without blame. Refuse—and in very truth, Pilate shall have you crucified. Hear the gold chink. Look at the faces of your men. We, the Sanhedrin, will go with you and make all right with Pilate.

CENTURION *(After looking at the faces of his men):* What must be must. We will obey. Yet we did not sleep.

JOSEPH *(Under his breath):* Jesus of Nazareth has risen.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE LITTLE MAID

HE hill-tops of Judea are bare, but beautiful, with the exceeding beauty of all flowers; and the people of Judea are poor, but the most beautiful stories in the world have grown among them.

There was once a little maid, named Miriam Bathcleopas, which means Mary, Cleopas' daughter. She lived in a town near the great city of Jerusalem; a very beautiful little town, and just a pleasant afternoon's walk from the great city. Leaving by the western gate, you follow the Roman road a mile or two, to a rise where there is a magnificent view of the city, and the whole region beyond it, as far as Bethlehem. Then you go down, turn, and start up what is even yet a lovely valley. There is a clear brook, green fields, orange and lemon groves, pleasant enclosures, shady nooks, bright dwellings; and from some shoulder of the hills—no one agrees with any one as to which shoulder, for there are the ancient ruined foundations of villages on all of them—the little village of Emmaus looked down the valley.

On the afternoon of the day after the Passover, in the year 29 A.D., the little maid, very sad, was looking out over this valley. She was sad because the Master was dead. The news had come on Friday and Cleopas, her father, had left everything and hurried

into the city. On the Sabbath, he had of course stayed there, for travel, then, was against the law. On the morning of the first day of the week he would naturally stay, for every suburban resident, with a free morning in the city, has plenty to do to fill it; but it was now afternoon, and so she sat and looked down the long road, awaiting him with the details of the death of the Master.

The road, even now, lies bright down the valley, like a satin ribbon winding in and out between velvet-green orange orchards. Then the valley was more densely populated, better irrigated, and more thoroughly cultivated still, and therefore far more beautiful. The beauty of it must have brought some vague comfort to the little maid; for it is by tears that our custom-sodden eyes are cleared to see how lovely God's world really is, and, for tears, that loveliness is the quietest, and sometimes the sole, assuagement.

Among the many groups dotting the long road, her glance singled out one; at first doubtfully, then with increasing measure of assurance, at last with certainty. All Judea wore the same costumes, so her recognition was hardly aided by the garments; and it was much too far to distinguish faces. It was therefore by manner and bearing, way of walking, and carriage of the head, that she knew Cleopas, her father, and later Lucas, the young physician, his friend. Between them walked some one in white whose manner was also not unfamiliar. Somewhere she had seen just such an erect figure, just such dignity of bearing. It was associated in her mind with sickness; with a sick child, who had been made well. Then it flashed across her. In manner and bearing, the midmost man was like, was exactly like, the Master who was rumored dead.

The ancient world had no newspapers. It got its

news by rumor, and rumor was always wrong as to the details, and often false as to the very central facts themselves. Therefore no one except the eye-witnesses was ever sure of anything until some time after it happened.

The little maid, therefore, had obtained her information about the Master's death from rumor. All that she really knew was that the women were talking at the fountain, telling of the dreadful death of the Master; and, of course, it was possible that they were mistaken. Indeed, they must have been mistaken; for here he was, walking up the road with Lucas and her father.

The whole great and sorrowful load upon her heart lightened at this, and gave place to buoyancy and joy. It was as if the sun had come out from behind a cloud, as if the birds had started singing. She could hardly keep her feet from dancing, and her tongue from calling out. There had been an earthquake, and an unnatural darkness, the day they said he was crucified, followed, in thirty-six hours, by another earthquake, and preceded by an eclipse of the moon; and the woman had said that all nature reeled and shook, in sympathy with his death. It seemed to her now that all nature was rejoicing in sympathy with his living. She watched the wayfarers a moment longer and then, for the joy of moving rather than for any need of haste, she set about preparing supper, the chief meal of the day.

From time to time, as she put things on the table, she tripped to the door to watch. She had no one in the house to speak to, for her mother was dead and their single servant, her old nurse, was away. Sometimes she lost the travelers behind a house, and once, for a long time, behind a grove; but always they came out again and always nearer. With innocent cunning she took many of the things off the table again, that she

might have need to put them back after the three had come; for Jewish customs differed from our own, and though, in the Judean hill-country, men and women of the same family often ate together, no woman would have thought of sitting at table with an honored guest. Therefore, a woman's one chance of seeing and hearing such, was to wait at table. She treasured this chance; she had great wish to see and hear the Master.

As the three came closer, she saw that Cleopas and Lucas were much the same as when last with her, though both looked somewhat older; but the Master had made some changes in his garments, and even in his expression. He seemed more the Master; more masterful. They were so deeply immersed, sunken, submerged in conversation, that they said little in greeting to her; in fact, the Master said nothing at all, but only smiled on her. Then he bade Lucas and Cleopas good bye, and made as if to go on through the village.

The little maid was much cast down at this, and all her preparations suddenly seemed useless; but Lucas, the physician, interpreting her half-uttered protest, and adding to it a very strong one of his own, detained the Master; and then Cleopas, as master of the house, poured protest, objection, and invitation upon him, even putting a hand on his shoulder and using the semblance of friendly force, so that at last they constrained him to abide with them. Miriam only understood a part of their talk, for much of it depended upon what had gone before. It was about the Great Ones of the Lord, calling, in reverberating thunder, the long roll of the Prophets and quoting words from each that flashed out thoughts like lightning. The interlocking of the thoughts was beyond Miriam. Too much had gone before unheard by her; and besides, linger as she would, while in the room, and hasten as she might outside it,

still she had to be outside it sometimes, and so missed much. Yet she made out enough to see that the talk was of the Messiah, Israel's expected deliverer; and not striding gigantic from the East, in dyed garments of Bosrah, to set his heel upon his enemies, but smitten, despised, forsaken, mouthed at, with pierced hands and feet, and brought into the dust of death; and, most bewildering of all, it was also about the Master. The little maid knew that he was the Messiah, the Expected of Israel; but she could not understand why they spoke so much of a Messiah suffering, and always in the third person. Though they were speaking to the Master himself, and about himself, her father and Lucas always said "he" not "you." She grew so puzzled, she would have asked them once; but the Master, who was watching her, and read her thoughts, smiled and shook his head. Therefore she smiled back and was silent.

At last everything was back on the table, that could be put there, and there was no further excuse for going in and out; so she had to tell them that supper was ready. They were so deep in talk, she had to tell them twice. Then Cleopas, her father, gave them seats at table. To the Master he gave the seat at the head, as the little maid had meant he should; only he did it not as a matter of course, but with an explanation, saying that so learned a rabbi, knowing the Prophets through and through, must say the grace. As was the ancient custom, the little maid waited for grace while Cleopas and Lucas sat down, and the Master remained standing. Then, as was the ancient custom also, he took the bread in his hands and said the old, old grace before meals, which begins: "Praise be to God, who maketh bread to grow out of the earth for his people, Israel." Then he broke the bread; and, as he did so, she noticed two red wounds in his hands.

Cleopas and Luke arose so quickly that Lucas overturned his chair. "It is the Lord," said he; and Cleopas said, "Rabbi, Rabboni". Then, before they could fall at his feet, he was gone. The little maid did not see him go. He was just gone.

While she was puzzling over this, Lucas spoke at last, in a voice so deep with awe and joy, it frightened her.

"It was the Lord, Cleopas, it was the Lord."

"Yes," answered Cleopas, in the same tone, "it was the Master, the Lord."

"Why, of course it was the Master," said the little maid. "Is it possible you did not know him all the time?"

"Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked, Lucas?"

"Truly we should have known."

"Why, father," said the little maid, "I knew him from the time you came in sight. What is the matter?"

"Last Friday," said the father, very slowly, "Jesus of Nazareth, the Master, died, on Golgotha, at the ninth hour, upon the cross."

CHAPTER XXXII

RESURRECTION

T was supper, on the first day of the week, at John Mark's house. Peter, James, and Thomas were absent, but so many others were there that Mary, John Mark's mother, and Rhoda, her housemaid, had ample work in serving. The whole discipleship was stunned and heartbroken; but people must eat, even though the world break around them. Therefore, Martha of Bethany and Mary, the mother of our Lord, notable housekeepers both, had come from John's house to help, and had brought Mary of Magdala, and others with them. The women were not heartbroken. Rather, they were quietly jubilant, and a little defiant.

John Zebedee said grace, in the absence of Peter and James. He ought to have been gloomy, like the others; but his eyes exulted and blazed, as did those of the women. There was a good supper—bread and wine, lentils, roast mutton, broiled fish, and honeycomb—but John spent scant time eating. Soon, he was on his feet for the first of the speeches.

"Brethren," he said, "I have been to the High Priests' house. They roused this morning at the earthquake. Before they slept again, one came, running, whom Caiaphas had set to watch the guard. He said that, as he looked over the wall into Joseph of Arimathea's garden, a man of light appeared in the sky. He des-

cended, and rolled away the stone from the door of the tomb. Then came the earthquake and a blaze of light too bright for seeing. Ere he had well done, came a Roman, running slowly because in armor, who said the same; adding that they had looked into the tomb with torches, and it was empty. Caiaphas was angry and said a meteor had fallen, and we had slipped in and stolen the body. Then came Carina, the centurion, with soldiers. Caiaphas shook a great bag of money at them and told them they had been smitten senseless by a stroke of lightning, and we had stolen away the body while they slept. They said Pilate would crucify them if they told that tale. Caiaphas said he would hold them safe. Any man might be stunned by lightning. Besides, it must be so, for where was the body? So they agreed it must be so, and took the money. Has any one seen the Lord's body?"

John spoke as one exultant, but the seven remaining Apostles and the other disciples shook their heads. John repeated his question, and at last Mary of Magdala answered:

"Yes. I have seen Him, living. I clung to His feet. They were pierced with the nails. I have told you what he said, but none of you will believe, except John."

"Andrew, what think you?" asked John.

"I would give my life to believe," said Andrew, "and so would we all. But she saw angels, too. It was a vision."

"If it were a vision," said John, "the body would be in the tomb. But the tomb is empty. Peter and I went and looked. Where is the body?"

Andrew lay down, with an unbelieving gesture, and Mary of Magdala turned to Mary, the Mother of Our Lord, who was also serving the supper.

"You tell them," she said.

STS. PETER AND JOHN RUN TO THE SEPULCHRE. St. John xx. 4.

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"So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre."

There was a little pause till Mary, Our Lord's Mother, began. It was unprecedented that she should be there at all. She should have been in the inner chamber of John's house, in retirement. Nothing could so clearly emphasize her belief as her presence. Now, she leaned forward and spoke softly, but very earnestly.

"Faithful friends, would I be here if I believed Him dead? He is not dead, but living. We met Him on the way to the garden. He said, 'All hail!' and gave us the message for you, which we have delivered and which you cannot yet believe. He is not dead. He is not dead, but liveth."

"He told us often He would rise again," said John. "What say you, Philip?"

"He meant that he would die politically and rise from political retirement. You yourself said so, John."

"True, but I changed my mind, when I saw the neatly folded grave clothes in the empty tomb. Till then, Mary of Bethany was the only one who took him literally. He said that Lazarus' sickness was not to death, so she laid aside the spices bought to embalm him, even after Lazarus was dead. He said that he himself would die, so she took the spices bought to embalm dead Lazarus and anointed Yeshua's living body for the burial. He said he would rise again, so now she believes. How is it, Lazarus?"

"She is here, John. Ask her."

"How is it, Mary?"

"He liveth! He liveth! Oh, he liveth!"

"How is it, Philip?"

"Grave-clothes prove nothing. Peter, too, saw them, and did not believe. I would not speak so plainly in their presence but that you press me, John. I know they think they saw Him; but I cannot but hold Peter right, when he called the stories of their visions 'idle tales.'"

Philip lay down, and again the Apostles and the bulk of the disciples nodded. Yet the women looked at each other, untroubled. They knew.

There were more men present than the tables held, besides women, so that the doors were guarded by a little group outside each, as they had need to be, for fear the Temple police might come and make a wholesale arrest. Those not at table would eat later. There came a knocking on the door, and James entered. John gave up his place, for now that Yeshua was gone, James was head of the house of David, and rightful King of Israel. James was usually a quiet man, but now his eyes blazed.

"You are late, James," said John.

"I did not know there was a meeting, John. I only knew some of the brethren would be here."

"'Twas all any of us knew," spoke up Nathaniel. "We gathered as it were by instinct, before we scatter—forever."

"We spoke of Yeshua risen," said John. "The women believe and I—none other."

"I take John's place at head of the table, brethren, because with Yeshua dead"—a dozen winced at the word—"I am head of the line of David. But I take it only to yield it up again. I am not head of David's house. Yeshua is not dead."

"James, are you too persuaded by the women?"

"No, Levi God's-gift; I saw Him."

"What!"—this from a dozen.

"I saw Him. I was praying, and one came and called me, saying: 'James! James!' I did not know Him, but answered, 'Here,' thinking it must be John. 'What were you saying, James?' He asked, and I answered, 'Would God the story of women might be true.' 'It is,' He answered, and then I knew Him."

"Oh, what else? What else?"

"I put my hand upon his shoulder, firm flesh and strong. I felt the muscles play under my fingers. I peered into His face by starlight. It was Yeshua. Then, ere I could kneel, He was gone."

After a long pause, Simon Zealot, questioned:

"When and where?"

"Ten minutes ago. Here, on this housetop."

The unconvinced disciples looked at each other and shook their heads. At last, John said:

"Out with it, Judas Lebbaeus. What think you?"

"Would God I might believe—but alone—at night—on the housetop—thinking intensely of this very thing. James was ever quiet, something of a dreamer. Why did not Yeshua come to us, talking of Him below here? We love Him too. Why, if this be true, Death would be dead, and Yeshua Bardawid Lord not of earth alone but hell and heaven! It is too great. Nay, James, you saw a vision."

'Nay. What I saw, I saw. He loves us all. Wait, and you too may see."

"He spoke much of faith. Perhaps he does not come here, since you have none"—this from John.

"You have a plenty, John, and have not seen Him."

"One of the seventy, Luke, the physician, with Cleopas, of Emmaus, and his daughter, have come, bearing so strange a tale that those who serve downstairs cannot believe it." The speaker was a pleasant-faced serving man of the household, whom John knew, for he had once followed him to the house, bearing a pitcher.

"Admit them," ordered James.

There was an excited silence, while young Luke, with grey-bearded Cleopas and a slim, young girl entered; but before they could speak, there came a hammering

on the outer gate, so clangorous that the whole company was amazed. Then came, after but a moment's delay, the sound of a man running upstairs, and Peter, followed by all who were in the house, burst into the room. He paused, panting.

"What is it, Simon? Speak."

"Jesus Christ is risen!"

"Say on."

"I know that I am not fit to be with you, for I denied Him. You have all been kind, but I abhorred myself. Therefore, I went by myself to the tomb, to be alone; but folk had gone to look at the empty tomb, and there were people there. There is no public place around Jerusalem where one can be alone. But I have, as you know, carried the key of Gethsemane for him for days—and had forgotten it. So I went to Gethsemane. There, as I mourned, He came to me."

"How?"

"From among the bushes. The prints of nails are in his feet and hands. Long scratches from the thorns are in his forehead. He laid his hand upon my shoulder, raised me up, and talked with me."

"What said He?"

"Nay. That rests between Him and me. What would He say to one who had denied Him? It is enough that He has forgiven me. But at the last, He asked if I were sure that it was He and when I answered, 'Yes,' he sent me away, by strong compulsion, to find and strengthen you. He reminded me that He had told us that on the third day he would rise. We are to meet Him in Galilee. I left Him at his orders, standing among the rosebushes."

"What say you now, Jude, Philip, Andrew, Levi?" asked John.

Simon Peter turned and looked up and down the

line. The man blazed with certainty. He looked each between the eyes, and by sheer force of personality, fanned the flickering faith of each. Slowly their faces changed until their eyes, too, gleamed.

"Speak you also, Cleopas," said James. "Let the doors be closed."

"Luke and I walked to Emmaus. One met and questioned us. Our hearts burned within us, but we did not know him. Then began he with Moses and the prophets, and showed us how all things that have happened were foretold of him. When we reached home, we constrained him to come in and sup with us, gave him the head of the table, and called on him to say grace. He took the bread and broke it, as the Law requires. We saw the nailholes in his hands, and in the breaking of bread, he was known to us, and vanished from our sight. Miriam, here, saw also. Speak, daughter."

"I served at table. I knew him all the time. I had seen none from Jerusalem since Passover, and so thought that that rumor of his death must be mistaken. He is alive. I did not know that he was dead until they told me."

"Lord, we believe," said John. "Help thou our unbelief."

Then while he was still speaking, a quiet voice they knew and loved said, "Peace be unto you," and One stood in their midst.

Thrill upon thrill of terror ran through them. Believing and half-believing alike, they were afraid, and started back. At last Andrew gasped out, "It is his ghost."

The wise, slow, kindly smile they loved so much assured them, and the voice, they knew so well, said:

"Why are you troubled, and why do doubtings arise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is

I myself. Handle me and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones, as I have."

Reverently, after a long pause, John approached and touched Him, then Mary, his mother, then Peter and James. Then suddenly it was if a barrier broke, and in sobbing, gasping thankfulness, they all thronged about Him, just to touch Him, to put a hand upon Him and be sure it was He. A word here, a greeting there, He had for all of them. Then while they yet disbelieved, for wonder and joy, He glanced at the table and said, "Have you anything to eat?"

Martha of Bethany ran to the supper table, took a slice of bread, put on it what was handiest,—a bit of broiled fish it was, and a honeycomb,—and brought it to Him, and He ate it, slowly, calmly, quietly, as always. And then, at last, their last doubt vanished, and they knew.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE FIRE OF COALS

THE Sea of Galilee is about twelve miles long and six wide, and on its thirty miles of beach, it had nine cities, besides villages. A road encircled it; and on that road, between the cities, were villas. Thus it was hard to get more than a few hundred yards from a house anywhere on its shore.

The dense population demanded fish, and paid well for it. The lake was, therefore, alive with fishing-boats. They hailed from every lake-city and the villages between, but, more than any other, from the fishermen's suburb of Capernaum. This was a village one house thick and two or three miles long, stretching south along the beach of the plain of Gennesaret, towards Magdala, and named Bethsaida, or Fishtown. In this village of Bethsaida practically every family was under personal obligations to Yeshua Bardawid, the prophet of Nazareth. He had not only healed all the deaf, dumb, blind, lame, and insane, there, but, at least once, he had walked slowly the whole length of the village, while the people brought all the ordinary sick out of the houses on cots, and he had cured them. Therefore, every one had cause to be grateful to him at least for the cure of some relative, if for nothing else. Therefore, also, they all knew him by sight.

Fishermen are no great lovers of authority, especially

where every town has an octroi-duty, with tax-collectors at the gates, who habitually accuse even the innocent of smuggling. Therefore Bethsaida was sullenly discontented. News had come from Jerusalem, of how the High Priest and the government had arrested the Prophet of Nazareth, and condemned him to death, ostensibly for blasphemy, but really because he had injured the income of the High Priest's sons, by breaking up the bitterly-unpopular traffic of money-changing in the Temple. They had then handed him over to the Roman governor and had him executed on a false charge of sedition; how false a charge none knew better than these same fishermen of Bethsaida, who had once joined in an attempt to get him to head an insurrection, and had failed. The thing was so barefaced that even the Roman governor himself had tried to save him; and that was practically unheard of. It was true that the Master's eleven lieutenants—there had been twelve but one had proved a traitor and had killed himself—were now in Galilee, five or six of them in this very village of Bethsaida; and they were not broken men, but rather like men who had heard some strange news of joy. They said that their Master was not dead, but risen; but, of course, no one could believe that. A hundred men of Bethsaida alone, a hundred thousand of the country at large, had seen him crucified on a hill at the gate of Jerusalem during the height of the festival season, when there were at least two million pilgrims in and around the city; and within the next few days, they had all scattered and told about it. It is true that there had been an earthquake and darkness, and much confusion, and that they added rumors that he had been seen since, and that his tomb was empty; but nobody believes rumors. Therefore the attitude of the fishermen of Bethsaida was one of more than usually sullen discontent.

One more injustice had been scored against them by the government; and, as often before, the only thing that kept them quiet was the utter hopelessness of rebellion.

Simon, the fisherman who lived in the last house at the southern end of Bethsaida, was troubled. To the discontent of the others, he added a personal grief that lifted his feeling out of sullenness and into sorrow. The Rabbi Yeshua Bardawid, when he lived in Capernaum, had been in the habit of walking along the lake beach, and returning through the fields of the plain of Gennesaret; and, since Simon's was the end house of the village, the walk always took him by it. He had, more than once, asked and received a cup of water at the door. From this a friendship developed which was cemented when the Rabbi cured Simon's little son of the burning fever. Later, Simon himself was thrown helpless on his bed by a sharp attack of what we would call inflammatory rheumatism, brought on by exposure. Simon called it a binding with ropes of fire by Satan; and, as it kept him from earning a living, and was excruciating agony besides, he was trebly grateful when the Rabbi Yeshua, the next time he passed by, came in and laid hands upon him and cured him. Strongest tie of all, the Rabbi Yeshua had given Simon the chance to become one of the seventy messengers whom he sent to the cities of Perea to arrange for his visits there. Simon had not taken it. He had been ashamed of his supineness ever since, and had meant to tell the Rabbi so the next time he saw him, and to ask his pardon. And now it was too late. Simon remembered the look on the Rabbi's face when, at the call for men, he had caught his eye and yet failed to volunteer; and it was a memory that lifted his discontent above sullenness and into sorrow.

One night Simon went up to the middle of the village,

and, while there, saw the other Simon—captain of the fishing-boat which belonged jointly to him and the two Zebedees—put out with a crew. There were James and John Zebedee, and captain Simon's brother, Andrew, the mate, and some others, and their manner was that of men in a dream. They did not seem heartbroken at all, although they had seen Rabbi Yeshua, their Master, crucified. As was their custom, they sailed south down the coast to their usual fishing-grounds between Bethsaida and Magdala. Every boat had its favorite fishing grounds because, when you draw nets over a rocky bottom, you need to know that bottom minutely. Fishermen usually go to their farthest place first and work homewards, so that, at the end of an exhausting night's labor, they may be near home, instead of miles away. They were therefore due to pass Simon's house again just before dawn.

That night, Simon lay long awake, thinking about Rabbi Yeshua Bardawid and his most pitiful story; for Simon had hoped that he might have been the man who was to redeem Israel. Later he fell into an uneasy sleep, in which he dreamed that he heard some one calling. He woke with a sense of being needed for something, and, of course, threw on some clothes, and went out to look at his boat. Fishermen always do that. A boat is an expensive thing, essential to prosperity, and almost as costly as a small house; and cables may chafe, buoys fetch loose, and any one of a dozen other accidents may happen; so that every fisherman goes out to take a look at his boat at any hour of the day or night, when he happens to think of it. It is a professional habit, and universal.

False dawn had left the sky, and it was the darkest hour of the whole moonless night. Simon had turned

to go in again when some one, very close to him, spoke, saying:

"Simon."

There was that in the quality of the voice, a sense of quiet power, which caused Simon to add a title of respect to the usual answer to an unknown speaker. He said:

"What is it, sir?"

"I have need of a lighted charcoal furnace with bread and fish, on the point there."

Simon leaned forward to peer through the darkness at the speaker. He saw a tall dim form, indistinct but not wholly unfamiliar.

"Who are you, sir?" he asked. There was no answer.

"You know my name" said Simon, after a pause. "No stranger would ask such things of a stranger. I have heard your voice before, though it must have changed somewhat, for I cannot tell where I heard it. It is a friendly voice. May I come closer?"

There was no answer, but the stranger himself came closer, and turned his face to the stars. Simon gripped very hard the doorpost of his house and began to talk, half to the stranger and half to himself.

"I am dreaming," he said, "yet it is a glad dream. I should be very much afraid, Master, for they told me that you were dead, yet I am not afraid. There must have been some mistake. 'Fish and bread and the boat's charcoal furnace,' you say? Pardon me, that I went not on your errand to Perea. My heart has been sad since. 'Fish and bread and charcoal.' Oh Rabbi, Rabboni, dost thou live? Is it thou?"

"Do not be afraid. It is I."

Simon straightened up from his movement, to fall at the Master's feet, for there was no one there. The tall figure was gone, the well-known voice was still.

There was no sound of any one moving through the garden or along the beach; no sound of anything at all except the little lapping ripples that tinkled among the pebbles. The whole thing might easily have been a dream.

Simon pondered over it a moment. "My heart sings within me," he said at last. I am too glad for it to have been a dream. I failed him once. Let me do his errand now."

Working swiftly, though without hurry, he pulled on the stern-line of his boat, waded out to her, and brought her charcoal furnace ashore. "He must have forgiven me," he kept saying to himself, "forgiven, or he would not ask of me this second service." Taking the charcoal furnace, he went into the house, got a light from the hearth and built a fire in the furnace, took a loaf of bread and a large fish and came out of doors, setting the furnace so that the little breeze that made the ripples should blow through the aperture in the side, burn out the kindling, and wake the charcoal to a steady glow. When the fish was ready and washed, he picked up the furnace again, carried all to the point, a couple of hundred yards from his house, laid the fish across the bars of the furnace top to broil, washed his hands in the lake, unwrapped the bread from the large leaves laid around it to keep it clean, and waited.

Above the eastern hills, across the lake, the pearly twilight of the gray-blue sky was growing faintly golden, it was so near dawn. Southward, from down the lake, came the echo of tired oars in rowlocks. Captain Simon and his crew were pulling home. Inland, the cocks had begun to crow. Simon of Bethsaida waited a moment more, then saw that it was not intended that he should stay, and walked back along the beach towards his home.

A hundred yards away he turned and looked back. A tall and well-known figure stood on the point, dimly seen by the faint dawn-light, and with the glow of the fire of coals showing rosy upon his white robe. The boat was hidden by the point, but sound carries clear over water at dawn, and he could hear it coming. Then the Master hailed:

"Children," he said, "have ye any meat?"

The rowing stopped, and Nathaniel of Cana answered, "No."

"Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and ye shall find."

He heard the splash of the net, the beat of oars, and then broken exclamations and orders as it was pursed up. Then he heard the unmistakable drumming of fish, as they find themselves dragged into the air. Then, deep and clear, came Captain Simon Peter's voice:

"It is the Lord."

There was a heavy splash, the sound of a man swimming, and then out of the water at the point rose a dripping figure in a fisherman's cloak. He waded to the beach, and fell on his knees at the feet of him who stood waiting. Then Simon of Bethsaida saw that he was no longer needed, and went home into his house, and shut the door.

CHAPTER XXXIV

VIA GLORIA

HIS is a small shop. You tell me that your rent and expenses are so great that you clear little. I see for myself that the street will barely let two loaded camels pass, the houses are six stories high, and so close together that the blue sky is almost hidden; the passing multitude makes my head ache, and the gutter, in the middle of the pavement, reeks. You have inherited our uncle's farm in Galilee, where you may live among green trees and fields, under blue sky, in clean air, and make more money than here, yet you seek to rent it to me. Why not live there yourself?"

"Because of memories, Barchuza."

"Memories?"

"Memories; and such memories as you, above most men, should reverence and understand. Do you know what is meant by the sign of the fish?"

"I know. And thou, Barsalom, dost thou believe?"

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and in—"

"Enough. Speak lower. Shall I go on where you left off?"

"No need. The Master saved thee at thy father's prayer. Thy mother, with Mary of Magdala, and the other wealthy women, gave the monies which bought

his food and clothing, and that of the twelve. If any serve him, it should be thou."

"Most true; and I do serve him. But what of the memories?"

"Because of them, Barchuza, I shall live in this shop, on this street, until I die; for it is, to me, the most wonderful street in all the world. Fully a hundred times the Master came past here, privately. I have seen him stand just in front of us, where that Arab camel-driver is standing now, and heal a lame man. Three times he came past here publicly, in a procession gathered because of him; and each time I caught a glance from him, and shut up shop, and followed. Did you ever see him?"

"Twice, in Capernaum."

"Then you know how his look draws men."

"But the memories?"

"The first time he came by here in procession, he was mounted upon an ass's colt. There were people,—so many that they packed the street solid. The little Sons of Precept, twelve years old, had taken charge of the procession; and there were thousands of them, with palm-branches, marching in column of five, soldier-fashion, before him, shouting the welcome to the Galilean caravan. 'Hosannah!' is the cry. The Galilean caravan had come in, days before, and had been welcomed; and, besides, the little boys added his title: 'Hosannah,' they said, 'to the Son of David.' When the small boys in the street greet the rightful king by his name and titles, a country is not far from civil war; so I closed my shop, and followed. Besides this, the men, the fathers of the boys, were laying their long gray Galilean cloaks on the pavement for the Master to ride over, then picking them up and hurrying forward to lay them down again. It was as the rabbis

say we used to welcome our old kings after a victory, before the captivity. The Master rode to the gate of the Temple, dismounted, and went in, and I came away.

"The second time was that same week. First came a mixed multitude, the rabble of the city, looking back and cursing. Then came a pair of Roman legionaries, holding their spears cross-wise and making a clear street of it. Next came a man, a Jew, carrying the 'titulum,' the board on which was painted, in bold letters, the crime of the condemned. It was lettered, in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.' There should have been three men with boards, for there were two thieves with him, but there was only one board and one man. Then came the centurion in command, with half the detail, then the two thieves and then, the Master.

"He was a tall man, you remember, strong and broad-shouldered; yet the cross they had made for Barabbas was so heavy, and the Master was so weakened with loss of blood from the scourgings, that he could but just carry it; he was forced to move slowly, and he often stumbled. There was a sound of weeping from the houses, for many women had run to the windows; but the rabble in the street in front cursed steadily.

"I was very sorry for the Master, for I liked him, though I did not then believe on him; so I followed swiftly, for, since it was Passover, the front of my shop was not fully open, and I could close it in a moment. I called, 'The God of Israel help thee,' as he passed, and he straightened up for a moment and thanked me with a look. Following closely, I heard him speak to the weeping women. I saw Simon of Cyrene interfere outside the city gates, and saw the soldiers drag Simon from his horse and make him bear the cross. I

heard the chief priests taunt him. I stood in that immeasurable sea of people, close up to the ring of soldiers; and, when the darkness came, and many were afraid, and went home, I stayed. I saw him die; and in the great earthquake which followed, I fled to and fro with the multitude, keeping in the open and away from the houses. When it was over and the darkness had cleared a little, I went home; and that night, I prayed as I had not prayed for years."

"For what, Barsalom?"

"For forgetfulness."

"But you spoke of a third procession. I knew, of course, of the two you have described. What was the third?"

"Stop and think. Wait, I will jog your memory. Do you not recall that, on the morning when he ascended, he met the twelve and those with them in the upper chamber of John Mark's house in the upper city, and went out with them to Oilvet?"

"Most true."

"The most direct road from the upper city to Olivet leads past my shop, and on every morning it is crowded; for it is a main thoroughfare."

"True."

"Well, on this morning, it was more crowded still. Remember that, for six weeks, the city had been torn and scourged by contrary opinions. We all knew him by sight. We all knew that he had died and been buried; he and no other. We all knew that, two nights and a day later, the body was gone. Many thousands, I among others, had heard the story of the watch, and had gone to look at the empty tomb. Remember, too, that many bodies of the saints arose and came into the city, and talked with many; and the stories of those interviews, told by so many witnesses, had stirred the

fifty myriads of our citizens, and their visitors with them, into such excitement and terror that, at first, it seemed a small, a very small thing, that among those risen dead should be Jesus, the Son of David. Then the stories of the other risings ceased. The patriarchs and saints, the prophets, and saint-kings were seen no more. But Jesus of Nazareth was seen again and again. The Sanhedrin stuck stoutly to the tale that the body was stolen away during the earthquake, while the guards lay prostrate, and, at first, the city believed; but soon, those who heard the story, laughed. The very Scribes and Sadducees smiled, as they told it. None cared how the body got out of the tomb. What all wanted was some explanation of how the living Jesus of Nazareth came and went, moved to and fro, and spoke to many; he with a mortal wound in his side, piercing the heart, a deadly wound, of which he was dead and buried.

"The easiest way was to deny it all, and call all witnesses liars. This the Sanhedrin did, as did many of the citizens, myself among them. I think, however, that the Sanhedrin had doubts. I know that I did. There was, for instance, a child who lived across the street from me, and whom the Master had healed of a hurt hand—oh, nothing serious. The little one, leaning out to see the Master, had jammed it in a shutter, as he passed, and ran to him, as hurt children always did, for comfort. This little one stoutly maintained that he had seen the Master. He said that, as he wept at the cross-bearing, the Master had smiled and signalled that he would come again and see him; and that he *had* come again. It may have been but a child's dream but, because of that and other things, I was not so sure."

"Of other things? Speak plainly, Son of Salom."

"Nay, but I, too, had a dream, Barchuza. I am

not sure that it was aught but a dream; but I loved the Master, and he liked me. Therefore, I tell it to none."

"But you should bear witness."

"What need? He bore his own witness. One by one the Eleven came back from Galilee, and gathered in the upper chamber, and perhaps a thousand people, who had seen him risen in Galilee, came with them. There were more than five hundred who saw him there at once. Their leaders were with the Eleven, and the rest kept nearby. And then, one morning, he came among them there. John Mark hurriedly sent out his messengers to them all, and they gathered very swiftly; and then the Master told them to follow, and went out into the street, leading them.

"It was forty days after Passover, and there were few visitors in the city, but our streets are always full, even if only of our own citizens, and among them the word passed like wild-fire, for the whole city had used that forty days to talk and debate and wonder. The Master did not hurry. He walked quietly through his accustomed streets, neither faster nor slower than he used to do, and he talked with his disciples, and sometimes broke off to greet a friend by the way, just as had always been his habit. His route lay northward, down from the heights of the upper city, then eastward to the Jericho gate, more than a mile in all, through our most crowded streets. There could not have been less than ten thousand people who met him. I think it was more, for the word spread, and all who heard, hurried to see, so that the street was full, the mouth of every alley and cross-street was packed, many of the housetops were lined, and there were heads out of almost all the windows; for many men, who could not see for the crowd, ran ahead and mounted doorsteps

or entered houses. No one said much. There was no shouting. A sort of visible gasp ran through each section of the crowd as it saw him, and that was all. You see, everyone knew him by sight. For some years he had been the most conspicuous public speaker in Jerusalem, standing in plain sight and addressing great crowds daily; so all recognized him, and no one had to be told who he was. Besides, he was now marked. We could not see his feet, for the crowd, nor his side, for the mantle; but his hands, as he raised them, had great spike-holes in the palms, and the scratches of the crown of thorns were fresh on his forehead."

"What did you?"

"He passed within ten feet of me, as I stood on my doorstep. I said, 'My Master,' and he glanced up at me, smiled, and beckoned. I followed, very close to him, almost among the Eleven. I did not close the shop. When I remembered it, hours afterward, I made sure that everything was stolen, but all was safe. Some one had closed it for me. I never knew who did it.

"We went quietly down the street at the head of an enormous multitude, meeting and gathering up more and more people all the time. When we passed the city gate, the Master knew one of the Roman soldiers on guard there, and nodded to him, and the whole guard saluted. We went down into the valley of the Shadow of Death, crossed Kedron, and started up the Mount of Olives; and, looking across the valley, I could see the people swarming out of the gate like bees, and running to catch up. The Master walked quietly, as was his custom always, and he talked with the Eleven and with other of the nearer disciples. It was exactly as it always had been. The whole thing was impossible, flagrantly impossible; and yet, it was true. But for his hurt hands no one, looking, would have known that

the Master was dead and buried, with a mortal wound in his side, piercing the heart. We were full of questions, ten thousand questions we wished to ask; but no one dared. There had always been a something in his bearing that made for awe; and now it had increased. And always, more and more people welled out of the city, and came running to catch up with us.

"The Master turned out of the road at last, and went to the summit of the mountain, to an open space overlooking Bethany, where you can see all Jordan valley spread out like a map below. In all, he had walked perhaps three miles; and some new observer had joined him every step of the way. While he was moving along the road, the crowd which followed could not plainly see him; but now we could all see him very plainly. He stood on a little knoll and talked with the Eleven, giving them instructions of some kind; and then, he stretched out his hands in blessing, and all who believed in him, and some who did not, bowed their heads. When they lifted them, he was rising into the air, floating up and up from the midst of the Eleven. There was perfect silence. Of all the watching thousands, not one had any word to say.

"After a time, when he had risen, still slowly, so far that he was but a white speck against the blue, a cloud received him out of our sight. You know the story of the shining men who spoke to the Eleven, but for myself, I neither saw nor heard them. People spoke quietly together, but no one shouted or addressed the multitude or spoke loudly. We stood in groups around the place where he had been; and then, because there was nothing else to do, we went home. It seems a most lame and purposeless conclusion in the telling; but so it was. There was nothing left to do, and very little to say, so we went home. But now you understand,

perhaps, why this street seems to me the best place in all the world, because the one nearest him; and why I shall stay here until I, too, go home."

"Thou choosest well, Barsalom. I take the land at thine own price. Peace be with thee."

"And with thee, be peace."

CHAPTER XXXV

OUT TO OLIVET

Mark 16:19; Luke 24:44-53; Acts 1.

ONTIUS PILATE, Procurator of Judea!"

"What is it?"

"Neri, the spy, asks audience."

"Admit him. What is it, Neri?"

"Jesus of Nazareth!"

"What do you mean?"

"I saw Him."

"Nonsense!"

"Your pardon, Excellency, but I saw Him. I met Him on the bridge at Kedron brook. The eleven disciples were around Him. Much people went before and followed Him. Therefore I climbed the parapet and saw Him. His hands and feet are pierced. The marks of thorns are on His forehead."

"Someone impersonates Him."

"Sir, I know Jesus well. Remember for a year I followed Him, by your strict orders, to report to you His words and wonders, lest He trouble Rome. He cured me of a burning fever once. Besides, He knew me and He spoke to me."

"What said He?"

"When He passed by, I cried, 'Hail Master.' He said 'Neri, hail'. Wherefore I ran to tell you here, as is my duty. You may still see, from this great tower-

top Antonia, rounding the shoulder there of Olivet, the host of those that follow. Dismiss me, Lord, that I may follow also."

"Foolish spy, who is He? You should have followed, Jew, and learned at once who personates the Master. Send me the centurion on guard below, and go at once."

Pontius Pilate, Procurator, calls the captain of his guard.

"Here, sir."

"Hail, Caius. I saw from here ere sunrise many score of centuries of natives swarming through the Valley of the Shadow, cross the brook Kedron, and climb the road toward Bethany. They clustered round a white-robed leader Neri says was that Jesus of Nazareth whom you crucified on the day of the first earthquake. Take ten horse and a decurion. Overtake that leader. Say that Pontius Pilate waits to speak with Him; but use no force, my Caius, unless He is undoubtedly an imposter."

"Sir, no impostor can personate that King. He had a great wound gaping through the heart, a mortal wound. No man can live ten breaths with such a wound."

"Make sure. Change, too, the guard at the gate and send the men who saw Him here to me. Tell the new guard to send all wayfarers who met Him here, unless all turned and followed Him. Send also a courier to Caiaphas, telling and asking news."

"At command. Here comes the lady Claudia, your wife."

"Oh, Pilate!"

"What is it, Claudia?"

"Jesus of Nazareth! Old Lydia, my nurse, met Him today, alive, upon the street. You would not believe

when told of Peter and James, of Cleopas of Emmaus and the women, and how they saw Him, nor of Thomas and the Ten, nor of those five hundred on the Galilean hill. You said 'twas natives and their tales; but Lydia is our own and Greek."

"Say on."

"She went with two handmaids to bid Barshamar, the jeweler, come to me with wares. A great crowd, coming toward her, blocked the street. She saw Him from the doorway. She had watched Him well when tried, and knew Him. She came home weeping because she was a woman and a messenger and could not follow."

"On guard below. Send two men to bring Barshamar, the jeweler, here. Go quickly."

"At command. The guard of the gate waits below, Excellency."

"Bring them into the Praetorium. Come, Domina. Be careful on the stairs."

"A messenger from Annas, the High Priest."

"Your message?"

"Annas greets Pontius Pilate, Procurator, and says that from the upper chamber of John Mark's house in the upper city, where the disciples of the Man Jesus of Nazareth still gather, many came forth before sunrise, led by One robed in white, with wounds in hands and feet and side, scourge-marks on His shoulders, and thorn-marks on His forehead. All who met Him say it was Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. The women too—for hundreds saw Him from housetops and from doors—the women say the same. Most of the men who met Him turned and followed through the gate towards Bethany; and therefore Annas asks an interview lest there be rioting throughout the city."

"Say that Pilate greets Annas, grants the interview,

and asks that the High Priest Caiaphas be there. Where is Lucius Minucius?"

"Here, Excellency."

"You command the gate. What did you see?"

"Jesus of Nazareth passed out this morning."

"But the Man is dead. Explain."

"I cannot; but I saw Him. All we who guard the east gate know Him well. He was a Man most unmistakable, and passed twice daily. Half a dozen times, I have spoken with Him. He spoke with me today, by name. I knew His voice."

"What said he?"

"I and the guard saluted. You yourself have in His written accusation said He was a king. He said, 'Lucius, hail!' Publius here spoke with him, too."

"What said you, Publius?"

"I said, 'Forgive me, Lord'; for once I smote Him with a reed. He answered, 'Thou art pardoned, Publius'."

"What say you, men of the guard? Did you know Him?"

"Excellency, yes. It was Jesus of Nazareth."

"Dismissed. Has Barshamar, the jeweler, come?"

"Here, Excellency."

"Who, Barshamar, was the man who passed your shop?"

"I live, most noble Pilate, where men from the Temple and the upper town must come to reach the east and northern gates. A hundred times, the Man of Nazareth went by my shop. I know Him well by sight. The Man who passed this morning was the same who passed there, carrying a cross, the day of the first earthquake—Jesus of Nazareth."

"But this thing cannot be. The man is dead. Who

was it told me of His death that day? Was it not you, Decurion?"

"It was Caius Carina, sir, and I. We put a spear wound through His heart and saw the clotted blood come out. Our legion ought to know when a Jew is dead."

"What think you, Domina? Did the disciples steal away His living body, our soldiers keeping guard?"

"What matter now? He lives and walks the streets and knows His friends, a spear-wound through His heart. Caiaphas and Annas asked a guard lest He should rise from the dead. Here they come. Ask them."

"Caiaphas and Annas wait without."

"I go to them. Come, Claudia. What think you, Annas?"

"Pilate, if this Man, if this Man return, Jerusalem will rise and make Him king. We beg you close the gates against Him, lest Rome destroy us and our city."

"What say you, Caiaphas?"

"If this Man walk to and fro here or in Galilee, the whole world will go mad and follow Him. Arrest Him now at once, ere He reach Herod's borders."

"Whom think you Him, Annas?"

"Sir, an impostor."

"I have examined witnesses. No doubt you did the same. More than five thousand men have seen a Man here in Jerusalem who, they say, is Jesus Christ, crucified, dead, and risen. If it be any impostor, they will soon detect and leave Him."

"Sir, the Man is of Satan. He has claimed to be God. He has applied to Himself the Ineffable Name. He said He would rise. From Satan comes the power He is using to destroy the people of our God. Within six days He will be king. Within six months you

Romans will destroy Jerusalem and blot the worship of the one true God off of the earth."

"Is this your inmost thought, or do you think Him evil since He spoke against you?"

"Both. I am true High Priest of the true God. Whoever attacks me attacks God. Act, or next week you will have lost your province, and great Tiberius has scanty mercy on those officers whose folk rebel."

"You told me that He said by rising He would prove Himself divine. Suppose that He has risen."

"Then woe and woe to us, for we accused Him and you crucified Him! But no, it cannot be. The folk will make Him king. Tiberius will slay us and our nation. Satan hopes to sweep the worship of the Unseen God out of the world, and make all men serve idols. Take Him instantly, if you would save your office and our city."

"Why capture one you cannot kill? Why kill one who can rise again? I shall not touch Him."

"Caius Carina, the centurion, with news for Pontius Pilate."

"Welcome Caius. Say on."

"I took ten men and spurred towards Bethany. On the crest of Olivet was a great crowd, gazing upward. High in the air, there was a Man in white, rising. His garments gleamed. We were too far to see His face. We halted. He rose and a bright cloud received Him from our sight."

"Impossible!"

"Yet that is what we saw. We questioned men, a dozen, who spoke Greek. They said the man was Jesus, who had once been crucified. Here are the names of many you may question if you will. There was some talk of men in shining robes, who said that, in like

manner, He would come again, but them we did not see."

"You halted; were you afraid?"

"We were."

"Why?"

"This man was Son of God!"

"Annas, take heart. There will be no revolt. Caiaphas, your people will not make Jesus king till He returns. He will return when all men everywhere, with no bloodshed, are of one mind to make Him king. Claudia Procula, you heard all. What think you?"

"The Lord is risen indeed!"

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE POLITICIAN IN THE TEMPLE

NCE there was a rising young lawyer, who had the chance of a lifetime, and bungled it—or succeeded. He was one of the young men who gathered around the Sanhedrin, the great national legislature of Judea; and he was one of the very ablest of them, or he would not have had the chance. The great men of the Temple, which meant the greatest of all Judea, gathered to debate with Yeshua Bardawid, the great Prophet of Nazareth. It was essential that he be put down, for he had upset the entire banking-system of Judea and (since all bills of exchange in Roman times were drawn by Jews on Jews) had thereby dislocated the commercial paper of big business, over all the known world. He *must* be put down. If some great socialist, now, managed simultaneously to disorganize the clearing-houses and banks of half the cities of the world, he would not inflict so shattering a blow on modern world-business, as the Master had inflicted on the business of the Roman Empire. He *must* be suppressed and put down.

Therefore, the Pharisees tried. They were the Clerical Party in politics, and a power in the land. They constructed a question concerning taxes to which it was equally disastrous to answer either "yes" or "no," and even more disastrous to refuse to answer; and the Master took it and made of it a great moral

lesson, and a forensic triumph. The great men of the nation, the heavy artillery, the chief priests and intellectual lights of the Pharisees were present, but they were silenced. They had nothing to say. They dared not ask him any more questions.

Then the Sadducees tried. The Sadducees were the agnostic element in the land. Although few in number they were politically powerful. They held themselves emancipated from superstition, and, intellectually, the leaders of the nation. More important, they held themselves politically bound to help each other to the great places and high-salaried offices; and, as their point of view was practically the same as that of the higher Roman officials, they were usually successful, so that most of the great national offices were held by Sadducees. Representatives of the party had once challenged the Master to show a sign from heaven; that is, to perform a miracle which no man could attribute to Satan. The Master had not only refused, but had left them—fled from the test, as they would claim. His reason for refusal seems to have been that there is no such miracle. An unscrupulous man can always attribute anything to Satan, either directly, or, on the principle that it is worth the while of the powers of darkness to permit a little good in order that great evil may grow out of it. Still, the Sadducees were the only men who could make even a perverted claim to have triumphed over the Master in debate, and so they were eager to try again.

They constructed a question concerning theology, of such a nature that any answer whatever would be absurd. It is really one of the cleverest questions ever formulated, for it flicked the Pharisees in the raw, complimented the Sadducees, and contained a doubtful humorous story involving both; and lack of purity

was always painful to the Master. It was concerning life after death, and a woman who successively married seven husbands. The Master took it, transformed it, raised it to the level of the Heavens, and drew from it a beautiful moral lesson. The Sadducees retired discomfited. They dared not ask him any more questions.

Something had to be done and somebody had to throw himself into the breach, not only for the sake of the rulers, but in very mercy to the Master himself; for all this debate was public. Ten thousand men of Israel hung breathless, angry, and hilarious, upon its every word, and in six months its main points would be discussed in every synagogue from the Thames to the Ganges. If the Master could be discomfited in debate before that crowd, he would be so far discredited that he could not upset the money-changing in the Temple again. If not—well, he must be killed. To overcome him in debate would, therefore, be to save his life. A scribe came forward. Some one, probably the same man, had spoken approvingly of the Master's answer to the Sadducees.

"Master," he said, "what is the greatest—the first —commandment in the law?"

"Hear, O Israel," the Master answered; "the Lord, thy God, is One God." Then, continuing, he repeated the commands concerning love to God and our neighbor, which are the outcome of that profession. "Upon these," he said, "hang all the Law and the Prophets." So noble was the answer that the generous enthusiasm of the Scribe was kindled. For the moment, at least, traditionalism lost its sway, and, as Christ pointed to it, he saw, as in a vision, the exceeding beauty of the moral law. "Master," he said, "Thou hast said the truth; and such love is better than whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices."

"Thou art not far from the kingdom of God," said the Master; and, for the lawyer, the debate was closed.

Perhaps a thousand men heard it. Ten thousand saw it, and soon learned what had been said. A hundred thousand knew of it in a week. The spokesman and momentary leader of the Scribes had deserted his colleagues, and had put on record his public testimony that their adversary was right.

Those who have had experience with the bitterness of hotly-contested local politics during struggles when money—the livelihood—of the contestants is involved, need not be told that the Scribe left the Temple a ruined man. His offense was unforgivable. He had publicly borne witness that truth is true. Meeting truth face to face and recognizing it, he had proclaimed that recognition. He could have denied; he could at least have kept silent. Doing neither, and speaking out the honest conviction that was in him, he had thereby proved himself useless as a tool. There is no record, but there is also no doubt, that when remunerative duties arose, other men were employed. He was not punished; and indeed could not be; but he was let alone. His income was cut off. He had, it may be, a bit of savings, or some scrap of living inherited; but any income from work done, ceased. Though every Jew was bred to a trade, the influence of the Pharisees would be more powerful to prevent his earning a living in Palestine as a carpenter, than as a Scribe.

In the tremendous readjustments of spiritual perception, at Jerusalem, which followed Pentecost, this man—whose whole destruction had come upon him because he knew and acknowledged openly that truth is true—could not have remained in even outward alliance with the party that obeyed Annas, and contained Caiaphas. From sheer defiance, as well as from natural

instinct, he must have acknowledged the reality of the Ascension, and declared that it proved the actuality of the Resurrection. Cast out for this, from his party, alienated from his people, called a traitor by his own familiar friends, he must still have hesitated and refrained from casting in his lot with the Eleven and their followers. The same clear insight which had showed him the faults of the Pharisees, would also force him to realize the errors of the Apostles. Error there was, for the Apostles were human. We have record of an experiment in community property which failed, and of a quarrel which required arbitration, though both were divinely over-ruled for good. These, and other errors, our politician must have seen. He knew truth when he met it face to face on the highway, and therefore he knew error.

Thus it is not imagination, but simple statement of fact, even though there be no record, to say that, one day, about a year after the Crucifixion, two men set out from a house in the upper city in Jerusalem, from a council of twelve men who met in the large upper guest chamber. The house belonged to John Mark's father, and the two men had taken a prominent part in the council, though neither one had presided. That office belonged to James, the Master's cousin; spiritually, because of his relationship; from a worldly point of view, because, since the Master's death, James was the head of the house of David and, therefore, rightful King of Israel.

One of the two men was young, with a clear-cut, cameo face and a quiet manner. The other was sturdy and middle aged, but his hair was white. They went down hill, through stone passages, more like tunnels than streets, to the lower part of the city, between the two walls, where the poor lived in great stone tenements

six and eight stories high; and at a small room, high up at the rear of one of these houses, they knocked at a closed door.

The man who opened it was dressed in shabby clothes that had once been good, and his face, which had once been calm and intelligent, was deeply lined. There was no furniture in the room, unless a pallet on the floor can be called furniture, and there was no sign of food, or extra clothing. Two of the three were greatly changed since they last met, yet they all knew each other. Men remember the faces of those who look on at the crisis of their lives. The Scribe recognized John, the son of Zebedee, and Simon Barjonas, whom the Master had renamed Cephas.

"Hail, Levi Barjochab, who art not far from the kingdom. Peace be with thee."

"Thy peace return to thee, Simon Barjonas, witness to my ruin; for with me is no peace of my own."

"True, friend," put in John, entering the room quietly, "but the peace which is of God is with thee, for thy word to the Master."

"Be seated," said the ex-scribe, pointing to the pallet, "I once had cushions, a slave or two, wine and sweet meats for a friend, a better housing than this, and hope. Your Master, your strange Master, bewitched me, and all these I lost by a word."

Simon Peter ran his hand through his white hair, and studied the face before him for a time in silence. Then he said bluntly:

"If the Master bewitched you into an idle word, recall the word, Barjochab, recall the word."

"You know Caiaphas. What use to recall anything? He has no mercy."

"Nevertheless, a false word, idly spoken, should be recalled; and Annas, though he may have less mercy

than Caiaphas, has wisdom enough to give the man who withdraws hostile testimony, at least a pittance and a corner. Have you asked him?"

"No."

"Then go. Tell him that when you cried out, 'Master, it is well said,' you spoke falsely."

"But, man, I did not speak falsely. It *was* well said. The Master's answer was true."

"Then, man, how long halt between two opinions? For Jesus of Nazareth, in whom you have not confessed your belief, you have given up friends, and house, and servants, and food, and hope. Have others been to you, besides ourselves?"

"One or two, at first. You have been long in coming."

"We had other work; you needed time to learn your lesson; above all, we would not mar the perfect work of God in you, or your perfect sacrifice for Him. Yet we kept watch over you. How else should we know where to find you? The Master, you see, has therefore given you two friends. Believe me, many more await you. They will serve you—as do we. Turn and look behind you and you will see that John, your friend, has spread a napkin and upon it bread and wine and fruit. Have we your permission to sup with you?"

"I have here no means for the washing of hands to the wrists."

"Water can be had, if you wish. As for us, the Master taught us that, for those whose hearts are his, both hearts and hands are clean."

John and Simon exchanged glances, as the scribe closed his eyes and meditated. He was very thin, and his eyelids twitched and his hands trembled with eagerness for the good food. At last he said:

"And hope? I spoke of hope."

"Eat, man," said Peter bluntly, laying a hand on his

shoulder. "Eat, and hope. Through all the world are men, by myriads, eager to be told of the Master and his life. You questioned him in the Temple, saw him crucified, were in the city when he walked, risen again, to Olivet, and there ascended. You know the facts. Telling them is a life-work. Perhaps the power will be given you, as it has been us, to heal the sick and cast out devils. There will be much toil, great danger, a new life, a share in the awakening of Israel, and a triumphant welcoming of him when he comes again; or, if he think best, a calling home to return with him. Hope, man. Hope greatly. Hope very greatly, Barjochab, thou who wast not far from the Kingdom, when all thy blind friends rejected him."

"And what must I do for this?"

"Repent, and be baptized, and then bear witness to the facts you know of him, as we do. In the meantime, man, here is a supper spread in your room, and we are your guests. Invite us to sup with you, and eat."

"You—you are very good."

"There is none good but God, and His Son, Jesus Christ, who rose from the dead. We have but been with him; as have you, Levi Barjochab, my brother. Therefore, in his name, do this. The host says the blessing, and you are host."

"In his name, then, join me. O, God of Israel, who makest bread to grow out of the earth, reward these thy servants, and give me grace to serve Thee with them; in the name of Jesus Christ, my friend, and Thy Son."

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE LOST CROSS

S he dying, Rachel?"

"Yes, and babbling as he dies."

"It is not fit that a Prince of Israel, the richest man, and the best man, in all Perea, should pass so."

"Good, but not the best, Hanna. Israel has many good as he."

"But none better. He was a ruler from his youth, keen and kind, and clean. His household loves him, and he held the hearts of the poor in the hollow of his hand. They crowd the street outside to hear of him. What shall I tell them?"

"Come and listen. He may say something."

"Rabbi, all this have I done from my youth up. What lack I yet? That? Well, it is done. All that I have is sold and given to the poor. I thought you meant to have only twelve apostles. I make thirteen. It is weary work tramping to and fro, but the words of life ring sure and true, and something of thine has come upon me, for I, too, can heal the sick, and have cast out devils. What? Oh, Master, Master, not that, not that. Leave us not alone to do the work."

The aimless voice died down for a minute, sinking into an indistinguishable murmur, and the gray-haired, gray-bearded figure on the bed tossed restlessly. Then he spoke plainly again:

"We cannot bear it, Master. Yet we must bear it. The nails that pierce Thy hands go through my heart. Was it all useless? The darkness and the earthquake, and the clamor confuse me. I will go home and mourn and mourn, mourn for the lost hope of Israel."

There was a pause and the murmur of a crowd outside the house made itself heard; a hushed, stifled, insistent murmur of some people sobbing, and many whispering. Then the man on the bed began to talk again.

"Is it thou, Rabbi; O, Rabboni?" His voice grew stronger, and he struggled to raise himself in bed. A young man seated, on one side of him, and a white-haired woman on the other, rose from the shadows where they had been inconspicuous, and lifted him, while a younger woman brought a cup of water and held it to his lips. He drank, then spoke in quite a different voice.

"Where is he? I thought the Master was here; the Master, Yeshua Bardawid, whom you children never knew. Where is your mother?"

The white-haired woman tightened her arm around him and answered, "Here, beloved."

"I would have followed him, I think, but for love of you, Leah. It was a great love, and has grown deeper all these years, oh, best-beloved. Lay me down, please. What is that murmuring outside?"

"The poor, father. The poor of the city, who pray for you."

"My son, if you can find it in your heart, I would have you sell one fourth of all I have and give it to them. One share I give to your mother, one to your sister, one to you, and the fourth is mine; and what is mine I would make theirs; all of it."

"It shall be done, my father."

"Thou art, and hast always been, a good son; and thou, Miriam, a good, and most dear daughter. Leah, we shall not be parted long. Master . . . ." His voice trailed off into a murmur, and he began to toss again. One of the women at the door spoke to the other:

"Will the young master do it, Rachel? Shall I tell the poor folk?"

"Like father, like son. He is a good boy and will do it. Besides, Leah, there, would make Caligula himself keep any promise once made, and we are witnesses that he made it. Yet wait, and hear what is said further."

"I see that it is Thou, Rabboni," the sick man went on. His voice grew so deep and joyful as he spoke, that his old wife, thinking, for a moment, that he was not dying, peered into his face with a gleam of hope. "I see that it is Thou. The marks of the nails are in thy hands and feet. I have touched, with Thomas, the wound in thy side. I understand at last, dear Lord, I understand. The traitor is dead, and I know now why thirteen of us were chosen. It was in order that there might at last be twelve, and I am one of them. I also shall sit on one of the twelve thrones, and judge a tribe of Israel. For short toil, ample recompense forever. It were enough, my Master, but to creep into some humble corner and, looking out therefrom, to see Thy face?"

"Who is this Yeshua Bardawid, Rachel, whom he calls Master?"

"Ask some wiser head than mine, Hanna. Yet I remember, as a little child, a prophet, Yeshua Natzri, who went to and fro and cured madmen. The Romans crucified him for sedition."

"Oh, Yeshua Natzri? Yes, I know many tales of Him."

"My cross?" the voice went on; "Yes, Rabboni, I bear my cross. It galls sometimes, but is not too heavy for my strength. Thy cross was heavier. Leah proved true to me, cleaving to me at the last, and naught else matters. We have gone to and fro, and we have had abiding places. We have braved persecution and have fled from it. I have preached Thee alone in cities, and the care of many churches has been upon me. Of the seventy nations I have visited a score and two, and left men preaching Thee in all. Master, Thou knowest . . . ."

The voice, growing weaker, trailed off again into a murmur, then rose ringing:

"With the power that Thou gavest, I have fought the adversary a close fight, a strong fight, a fight victorious. I have healed the sick, made the deaf hear, and the dumb speak, and the lame walk. I have given sight to many blind, and cast out devils. I have cleansed lepers. I have raised one from the dead. I have preached to the poor the good news of the kingdom of God. Into Thy hands, O, Master, I return my sword. Be merciful to me."

There was a pause, broken only by the murmur of the multitude outside, and by the sobbing of the women. The end was drawing nearer, visibly. Then the voice began again, though weaker:

"The nails hurt my hands. I am surprised that it is no greater pain. I am too weary to suffer much. Thou wast crucified by the Roman, but this strange and barbarous people, who, at first, heard of thee gladly, have hardly heard of Rome. I have come very far, dear Lord. It was time to be called home. They do me a kindness, meaning harm to me. Forgive them their

meaning, because of their good deed. What were Thy words upon Thy cross? Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit? Even so, Father, for . . . ."

The voice ended abruptly, and the man struggled to sit up again. They raised him, and he looked around as might one but just awakened.

"Ah," he said, "I thought—I must have dreamed—I thought—Is this Perea?"

"Yes, my beloved."

"And you, Rachel, and Miriam, and Eli here? 'Take up thy cross and follow,' the Master said. I thought I had followed."

"You stayed at home with Mother, Father dear, and we are your children."

"Good children, good children both. The blessing of the God of Israel be upon you. But I should have followed. Opportunity such as never man missed before, was given me. I have loved you very dearly. Leah. Remember that. But a lost opportunity is greater than a sin. O, Thou who canst forgive both sins and opportunities, be merciful to me. I shall never sit on a throne now and judge a tribe of Israel. My name shall never thunder down the centuries. But John once sent me word that Jesus said that when He saw me He loved me. In memory of that love, perhaps it is not yet too late to creep into a little corner somewhere. I saw my Master face to face, once, and my heart has gone hungry for Him since; and shall hunger forever unless He pity. Give me the little corner, Lord, the little, little corner behind the people, where I may sometimes see Thy face. Rabboni, I have lost my cross. Out of great pity, cover me with the shadow of Thine own."

The voice ceased and there was silence for a moment. Then Hanna whispered: "Rachel, do you see anything?"

"The room seems brighter. I cannot see for tears."

"I see nothing plainly, but there is a great brightness in the room."

"Do they see?"

"I think not. They are watching him, and weeping."

The old man seemed listening. Then, slowly, there came into his eyes a light, a tearful light of wonder, joy, and thankfulness so great, so full of brightness and amazement, that he was transfigured by it, the years dropped from him like a garment, and he murmured:

"It is the Lord."

And so he fell asleep.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

WRITING THE STORY. I.

The Book of Levi Godsgift

HE first Christian Congregation was at Jerusalem. Somebody with a turn for business began its bookkeeping early, and made a list of the disciples before Pentecost, for the record says the number of the names was about one hundred and twenty. The Church, after Pentecost, made an intensive series of Old Testament Bible Studies, probably with Cleopas of Emmaus as teacher, for he had been instructed by Our Lord. The prophecies of the Messiah were the subject, and the whole New Testament is full of the results, so somebody must have taken notes. There were five thousand new disciples, some of them Scribes. The bookkeeping of a great church is enormous. There must be a list of all members with their addresses and an account of what is taken in and paid out, or the parish dies. There must be record of decisions made, or business becomes congested. Newcomers must be taught the facts of Our Lord's life and those facts connected with the prophecies. During the first few years of the Church, nobody had to work for a living. Whoever owned property, sold it, and gave the money to the Apostles, and everybody lived on the proceeds, and put in the time working for the Church, and studying. Never was such a

university, before or since. No wonder, when persecution scattered them, the Christians of Jerusalem were equipped to convert the World.

There was, then, an efficient staff of bookkeepers and writers in the Church at Jerusalem. All who know a great parish, know that there must have been, or the congregation would have gone to pieces. The seven deacons headed it, of course, since they must have kept some kind of accounts; but one of the Twelve had oversight, for they would have obeyed no other. There was only one business man among the Twelve, accustomed to keeping records. That man was Levi Godsgift, whom we call "Matthew".

Every college student knows that when several people take notes of anything the notes differ. Nobody can put everything in, and different men leave out different things. When these notes are copied and used to instruct others, different groups of facts rise. People begin to ask whose notes are right. Differences are easily settled by asking the instructors, but such questions impress vividly on the instructors the fact that there are differences. The common sense thing to do is to combine and correct the notes, and the common sense person to do it is the one in charge of records and accounts, if he be an instructor, because he has plenty of copyists and secretaries already.

Therefore, it is more than mere imagination, it is inference so reasonable as to be almost certainty, that one day Levi Godsgift rose in the council of the Twelve as they sat in the upper chamber, and laid a roll of manuscript upon the table. It was written in Aramaic, for that was the language of his scribes.

"Men and Brethren," said Levi, "here is the Book."

"Whose book?"

"Yeshua's, John Lightning, and after him, ours. It

is the book of the Acts and Sayings of Yeshua, considered in relation to the Bible prophecies of the Messias."

"Is that what you have been consulting us about so much for the last six months?"

"Yes, Jude. You laid upon my writers a year ago the task of straightening out the notes. We took what Cleopas of Emmaus said, added what the Twelve have learned by study, found that, in order to explain, we had to tell about many incidents and record many speeches, and ended by compiling this scroll, consulting all the Twelve for the exact words Yeshua used. You, yourselves, are as much authors of it as anybody; for though notes taken by dozens of scribes are its foundation, they were mostly notes of your stories about Yeshua, or of your studies and those of Cleopas."

"Then whose book is it?"

"Yeshua's, James."

"But Yeshua never wrote a line of it, Levi."

"Neither did I, except to dictate a version that would combine all the facts of all the notes, after we had sorted and grouped them; and to add the facts that explained the connection of the prophecies, and gave the setting for the things Yeshua said. The actual writing was done by a dozen scribes in turn. If not Yeshua's book, it is yours, or that of the whole Church."

"Call it, then, 'The Book'."

"That would not do, Andrew. That title goes to the law and prophets. It is not law, or prophecy, but the good news Yeshua brought us."

"You reworded most of the notes, did you not, Levi?"

"Yes, Philip."

"Call it then, brethren, 'The Good News of Levi Godsgift'."

"But the good news is not mine."

"What name did you give it?"

"None, Thomas Twin."

"What do your scribes call it? They must have called it something."

"'Levi's Notes'."

"Call it, then, 'The Good News According to Levi Godsgift' and read it."

There was a moment's pause. James looked around the table, and man by man nodded assent and settled into place.

"Let us hear it, Levi," said James. "Never mind its name. Read it."

WRITING THE STORY. II.

Simon Stone's Book

SIMON STONE, that fisherman turned preacher, whom we call St. Peter, sat under the awning on the house-top of a rich convert in Rome, and looked out over the river. His private secretary, John Mark, was with him. Both sat, Turk fashion, on the same divan, and between them lay a roll of papyrus.

"John," said Simon Stone, "Levi Matthew made a great book. I read in it daily, and my heart thrills every time I read; but it is useless here. These Jews read Greek, not Aramaic."

"I have heard rumor, Simon, that brethren at Antioch have already translated it, word for word, into Greek."

"Like enough, like enough; but our work here prospers and grows fast. 'Twould take too long to send to Antioch and back again."

"You wish a copy, then?"

"I think we need it. We send out more men, and more, to preach the Word. 'Twere well they better knew the Word they preach. There ought to be a dozen copies, or a hundred."

"Suppose, then, I translate it and set scribes to copy it?"

"That means two translations, East and West, with later conflict as to which is better."

"Then write a new book. You know the facts as well as any—better than most—and God, the Holy Spirit, guides you."

"Guides us, lad, guides us! But God, the Holy Spirit, guided Matthew. I do not care to try to improve upon that guidance."

"You will not make a new book, Simon Stone; you will not translate the old book; we cannot use it untranslated; and yet you want a copy for each new man sent out. Solve me that riddle."

"In a word, John, in a word; and that word is 'abridgement.'"

'Abridgement?"

"Yes. Make me a shortened Greek version of Levi Matthew's book. Leave out the genealogies, and the story of the infancy. They are not necessary for conversion, and he who wills to study, can get them from Levi. Leave out the Sermon on the Mount, for the same reason. Shorten a good deal here and there in other ways, and write it all in Greek. So shall it be the same book, not a new one, yet in a shape that we can use in our work."

"Why shorten? Why not add instead?"

"The things that Levi Matthew chose to tell were enough. I do not like to add to the work of the Lord therein. That Levi told enough is proved, for his book lives and works. That we can leave out much is plain, for he who would learn more may find some one who reads Aramaic, and turn to Levi."

"Content. Will you dictate?"

"Not so. Read over what Levi Matthew wrote as far as you can copy in a day. We will mark what to omit, and put you the rest freely into such Greek as men speak on the streets."

"If we leave out the story of Yeshua's birth, where shall we begin?"

"Where we began in real life, lad; with John Baptist, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make ready the way of the Lord'."

The two were silent for a long minute, praying. A little breeze swept across the river, and stirred their awning, and rustled the blank papyrus on the table before John Mark.

"I have prayed. There seems clear guidance," said Simon Stone.

Content", said Mark.

WRITING THE STORY III.

Paul's Gospel

THE greatest man who ever lived, except Jesus Christ, and Julius Caesar—if you judge greatness by the mark a man makes on the world—was a little, near-sighted, red-headed Jew by the name of Paul, who came from Tarsus. He or his private secretary, Lucas, or both, had been through Perea, notebook in hand, on the footsteps of Jesus of Nazareth; and between them they were thoroughly dissatisfied with the way his life had been told. They were familiar with Levi Matthew's Aramaic story of Jesus, and they had one of the first copies of Simon Stone's abridged account, as given by John Mark, but neither was what they wanted. Both skipped about too much. One can imagine them talking it over—under an awning, say, on the quarterdeck of a little bireme on the Aegean, for they were both busy men and got most of their leisure during sea-voyages.

"They are very good," said Luke, as he rolled up the manuscripts and put them in their cases; "very good, but, for our needs, not good enough."

"I think we could do better, Luke," said Paul.

"We could leave out many prophecies. Our Gentile converts are content to know that Yeshua was Messias; they do not care for all the details of the proof."

"You could put in all that Mary, the dear Mother,

told us at Jerusalem, when we questioned her on the songs she sang to Yeshua when he was a baby."

"Yet neither of us knew Yeshua. The brethren who wrote these lived with him for years. The Holy Spirit guided them."

"I think He guides you also," put in Theophilus.

Theophilus owned the bireme. He was an Alexandrian, who had come up the coast to Corinth on his own ship, met Paul and Luke there, and gave them a lift to Antioch on the way home. He had been heathen, but Paul had converted and baptized him, and now he was Christian and enthusiastic.

"Write down just what you have told me," he went on. "Or better yet, follow Simon Stone's plan."

"What plan?"

"Why, you yourself have pointed out to me how Simon Stone has, for the most part, translated Levi Matthew, telling the same stories in much the same words, adding a little, leaving out a great deal, but mostly quoting Levi. He did not plan a new book, but merely meant to rewrite Levi's Aramaic story, shortened for Greek use."

"For Jewish use, I think," said Paul, thoughtfully, "for Greek-speaking Jews."

"Do you the same. Only, since the skipping about troubles you, begin at the beginning. Rearrange Levi's work and Simon's, adding the new things the dear Mother told you, and just enough else of your own to connect the things you take from them. In that way you need not write a new book at all."

"It is true," said Luke, "that such a book would be just what our Gentiles need, and yet to write it would not be presuming."

"Paul," went on Theophilus, "if you do not do this,

some one else will. Dozens have thought of it already, and they will not do it half so well as you."

"'Tis true you are not the first who urged us to it. Many who hear Luke's notes of what Mary Mother told us have thought of it."

"The guidance of God is on you," ended Theophilus. "If you write for no one else, do it for me. I need it."

"Luke," said Paul, "Theophilus is right. I think you can do it."

"We can, Paul. Suppose we ask the Holy Spirit."

There was a time of silence, while each prayed, then waited for guidance, withdrawn into meditation. At last, Paul looked up.

"There is clear guidance, I think, Luke. How is it with you?"

"Clear guidance, Paul. Theophilus, have you pen and ink, and papyrus?"

"Brethren, I have. This book will be read through the ages. It is an honor, a very great one, that you begin it in my ship."

"And at your suggestion, Theophilus. Credit is due for that."

Theophilus brought pen, ink, and papyrus, and sent a slave for a writing-table. The ship was stealing slowly before a pleasant breeze, the sea was blue as the sky, and the land to port was lovely as a dream. Luke took the first penful of ink and paused, looking up at Paul.

"Ready," he said.

Paul prayed silently for a moment, then smiled and began to dictate:

"Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us, even as they delivered them unto us who, from the beginning, were eye-witnesses

and ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also, having traced the course of all things accurately from the first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty concerning the things wherein thou wast instructed.

"There, Theophilus," he said, "as long as the book lives, your name lives with it."

WRITING THE STORY IV.

John Meditates

OLYCARP, Polycarp, I am very old and have much need of pardon."

"From whom, dear John?"

"From you, from all the brethren, most from God."

"I do not understand. You sit quiet here for hours. Suddenly you speak of pardon."

"I have gone over in my mind, dear lad, the things we should have done when I was young as you."

"As young as I? My beard is gray, John Zebedee."

"Content, content; but what stupendous opportunities we missed."

"I see none."

"When we first found Yeshua we should have turned back and gotten John Baptist. Had John joined Yeshua, all Israel must have believed on him."

"True; at least probable."

"When Yeshua began to preach, we should have asked such questions concerning God as taught the nature of the world spiritual, and so the nature of His plan. We might have helped him so much more."

"And been crucified with him."

"What matter? We would have risen with him as did those others, the many bodies of saints that came into the city. What a chance missed! We should have stood beside him in the trial. We should have hung

beside him on the cross. We should have followed when he preached to spirits in prison. Polycarp, Polycarp, we were all blind in one eye, and could not see the world spiritual."

"If you were so, then we are blind in both."

"Not so, lad, for we taught you to open both eyes wide."

"The chief priests should have accepted him. Pilate should have released him. Herod should have acknowledged and proclaimed him. The people should have rescued him."

"Yea, lad, and Judas should have been faithful, and Peter truthful, and I fearless."

"John, of all the tens of thousands who came in touch with him, did any miss no opportunities, but do what he could, and all he could?"

"Yea, one."

"Who?"

"Simon of Cyrene. He carried the cross. 'Tis what I should have done."

"After the first ten seconds, he could not help himself."

"What matter? He did what he could. Marcus and Rufus have a prouder heritage than any heir of Caesar."

"Had you done that you would have died with him, and risen, and ascended. Perhaps His need was for you here. I know 'tis ours. You have strengthened the Church."

"'Tis God's strength, lad, not mine. John's own poor strength is not enough for John."

"You are the pipe He pours through. Were the pipe broken, how should we drink?"

"Why as you must, when I am summoned home."

"You feel sure, still, you are not to abide until He comes again?"

"Most sure, most sure. I tarried, and He came to me to Patmos. So was His word fulfilled."

"Dear Brother John, I ask a favor."

"All that I have, dear lad."

"The greatest opportunity of all has not been missed. One by one, men who knew Yeshua have done their work and gone. Matthew, and Mark, and Luke, and the others have answered, 'Here' to the eternal roll-call, and have left, to live with Jesus. If thou go and the Lord delay His coming, who, in the time between, shall tell us of the things that they left out?"

"Polycarp, Polycarp, Papias has been at me also to write the Book of Things Left Out, and when I said him nay, wrote more than one tale himself, although unlearned."

"He will, if you do not; but, oh John, you can do it so much better. Set no pen to papyrus. I have a skilful scribe outside to take your words down. Call him in, and begin. Once started, it is your nature to finish anything."

"So be it then. Call your man in. Is he ready? Where shall I begin?"

"At the beginning."

"Write then: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.'"

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